THIRD SERIES

OF

TALES OF THE MUNSTER FESTIVALS.

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THE RIVALS.

TRACY'S AMBITION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

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CHAPTER XII.

As I placed my foot in the stirrup, old Moan, in whose house I had passed the first fortnight after my wound, passed by our house, returning from work, with his spade upon his shoulder, and his aged brow pale and moist with the labour of the morning.

"I wish you joy, masther," he said, "that you're able to take the air o' the mornin' again."

"Thank you, Moran. Come hither. I never made you any recompense yet for the care you took of me when I was ill. I am going from you for a short while (as I intend); but, in times like these, when a man passes his threshold it is impossible to say whether his returning shadow will ever darken it again."

"Heaven is good, sir, heaven is good. Sure enough, a man's life is not in his own hands, and when his hour is come, an' heaven pleases to call him, all the wayp'ns, or guns, or soords, or pistols, or doctors, or muddecines, or precautions, on airth, won't keep him from it, an he'll be just as safe in the thick o' the fair as by his own fire-side; witness meself, that was all as one as transported for seven years, without stirring from my own harth-stone to desarve it, and laving a small family afther me, and a gale's rent due, were it not for your honour that saved us all, for which we

will always pray, an ever did, night and mornin', for all manner of blessings upon you an yours, for ever more, during duration."

"I thank you, my honest friend, but I neither doubt the goodness nor the power of Heaven. I only doubt my own worthiness of its favour, and lest, in its wisdom, a heavy punishment should be awarded to myself, I wish to prevent those to whom I owe gratitude from sharing in my evil day. Here is a sovereign, it is the last I have in the world, or I should be ashamed to offer you so little. If I live, Moran, I will remember you more effectually than that."

I put my foot in the stir up, and was about to raise the other leg from the ground, when I suddenly felt it grasped with a prodigious force, which presently brought me again to earth, and nearly endangered my equilibrium. Looking around, in much surprize, I observed my host standing close behind with a

flushed and offended cheek, an eye in which grief was mingled with anger, and lips pressed hard together, (as though he feared some extraordinary force was necessary to prevent their giving utterance to some passionate expression.) He caught my hand, pressed the sovereign into the palm, shut my fingers down upon it, squeezed my clenched hand between both his, as one would shut a box hard, and then turning round in silence, and throwing his spade on his shoulder, walked from the house.

"Stay, Moran," said I, "what's the matter?"

He turned round, and struck his spade with vehemence into the earth.

"Oh, matther! fie, for shame! sir, I did'nt think you'd do that at all."

"Why so?"

"If there was a poor man goen' the road, an' his enemy met him there abroad, an' bet

him, an' left him kilt upon the place, an' I took him in, an' looked afther him, an' hailed him, an' cured him for the love o' the Almighty only, do you think I'd deprive my soul o' the benefit o' that good deed another day, by taking payment after? If that man was my own landlord, an' I an' ould follyer, 'm sure a Turk would'nt take his money, let alone a Christian and an Irishman."

"You are a good man, Moran, but do not talk to me of Irishmen. I am an Irishman myself, but I have ceased to take a pride in the name."

"An' why so, Mr. Abel, a-chree? Oh, don't say that at all. There's enough talken again' the poor counthry, without you an' I that was born an' bred in the heart of it, unitin' with 'em. Bad is the name we bear among them that judge without knowen' us, an' why would we make it worse?"

"They were Irishmen," said I, with more

warmth than I at first intended, "they were Irishmen that murdered Mary Tracy!"

"I deny it, begging your honour's pardon!" the old man exclaimed, with a zealous flush upon his fine countenance. "I deny it, out o' the face, bodily, and for ever! A set o' poor boys are distressed an' sazed, an' driven out o' house an' home, without either country, or carakter, or relligion, an' they grow desparate, an' go fairly astray, an' their doings are to be charged upon the country after! There's no people under the sun, sir, that could stand that. They were no Irishmen that murdered the mistress, (heaven rest her happy soul this day!) an' kilt yourself. They had no stake in the country. But it was an Irishman, a credible responsible Irishman, though I say it, that tuk you in, an' refused your purse. Fair play all the world over. When you tell one story, don't forget the other."

I rode on, leaving my patriotic host to enjoy

the proud consciousness of having successfully vindicated the good name of his native island, while I turned my thoughts to a more engrossing subject.

"He has destroyed me!" I exclaimed, uncovering my head, and looking upward into the blue immensity of space above me. "He has left no room for exertion, no limit, no point of probable expectance, no resting place upon which the eye of hope may repose, in the far-stretching prospect of the future, more than my sight finds in that cloudless space above me; he has taken away the motive for my industry, and the consolation of my toil; he has made enemies of many who were indifferent to me; he has made those indifferent who were my friends; he has made my name accursed in the mouths of the people; he has robbed, he has duped, he has mocked, he has destroyed me! But I will cherish no revenge for that. It was his infirmity, and my folly and avarice that

wrought my ruin. My credulity was my own sin, and it is just that I suffer for it. Behold and judge me, now, Almighty, and offended Being! that there is no violent design in my heart against him. I seek him only for the purpose of recovering from him that which is my own, for the sake of those who are dearer to me than I am to myself. Protect and aid and govern me, therefore, that I may be hurried by no circumstance into the violation of laws which I desire not to transgress."

Even while I prayed, I felt a secret consciousness that my motives were not so reasonable and general as I declared them to be, and conscience, or the answering inspiration of Heaven, whispered to me that I was tempting the danger; that I ought to wait a calmer hour, and appoint a less perilous medium of communication with my enemy than a personal interview. But I repressed the counsel and pressing my hat down on my temples, soon lost

the voice of the monitor in the tramp of my horse-hoofs.

Fathers, injured and ruined fathers, to you alone, among men, it belongs to judge me! Children, read on, and be warned, but judge me not until you are fathers, and ruined! I wish not to justify a procedure that cannot be justified by the truth, but waste not all the forces of your mind in simple detestation. Be terrified for yourselves, and charitable and compassionate to me!

CHAPTER XXIII.

Heaths, mountains, bogs, cities, towns, villages, lakes, rivers, castles, round towers, and mud cabins, now flew by me in a varied and rapidly evolving panorama. I passed those lakes in which the peasant can discern, in clear summer days, when the heat has lowered the surface of the waters, in indistinct and perplexing glimpses, the shadows of towers, palaces, and gardens; the dwelling places of those happy

beings who enjoy the delights of an unfading health and vigour, among the ever blooming regions of the country of youth. I passed the wilds of Tipperary, where the clouds descended almost close upon my path, and a dreary wind whistled through the fields of vapour, while vast tracts of grey crag, and heath and brush wood, extended on either side. I changed horses at Clonmel, and after a few hours' sleep in my clothes, continued my journey. I rode along the banks of the narrow and winding Suir, which I thought as interminable as a Connemara avenue. I crossed the wooden bridge of Waterford. I trotted along the spacious quay, passed its magnificent chapel, a vast building, which (as I have heard of some fine pieces of architecture in London) is lost and buried among a conflux of miserable lanes and alleys.

The sight of the words "Hibernia Hotel," emblazoned on the front of a handsome house,

soon caught my eye, and made my heart bound with a fierce expectation. I gallopped up to the door, threw myself off the horse, and ascended the steps. A smart waiter met me in the hall with a napkin in his hand, bowing and retiring as if to marshal me in."

"Stay, friend," said I, "is there a Mr. Dalton in your house?"

"A low, fat man, sir?"

"No, a tall, thin man, red faced,—with a wicked smile about his mouth, dressed in a white coat, and russet spatterdashes."

"No, there is not, sir," said the man.

"Yes, it is false! there is," was my rejoinder.

He stared at me with a look of sudden anger, and then of caution and distrust. "There was such a person here yesterday, sir," he resumed, "but he set off this morning for Limerick."

"That's false! again," I said, greatly exasperated, "and if I find him here, I will fling you headlong into the street."

I passed him, and hurried through the various apartments like a hungry bear, while the bewildered Ganymede went to inform his master "that there was a cracked gentleman rampaiging the house from top to bottom, seeing would he get a tall thin man to murder."

My search was vain, and I remounted and left the city without a moment's delay. The disappointment, the heavy consciousness that I had wearied myself to no purpose, made the journey homeward one continued occasion of anger and vexation.

The dusk of the following evening beheld me with stiffening limbs, and an aching head, riding slowly into the city of Limerick, where I accidentally met with an old acquaintance. I passed through one of the narrow streets of the old town, in order to find the house of a former

tenant of mine, who kept a feather and skin shop in that part of the city. It was on market day, and the scene was equally remarkable for bustle and dinginess. The street, badly paved, and ancle deep in black mire, was covered with small wooden tables, extending nearly the whole length, on which were exposed for sale, pig's pettitoes, ears, knees, tongues of beef, iron and brass nails, huge cakes of coarse griddle bread, heads of cabbage, scissars and smoothing irons, locks, onions, sickles,ginger-bread, Saint Patrick's brogues, and other articles of humble luxury as well as use. Booths were hung with shawls and handkerchiefs, striped heavy woollen waistcoats, and beads of glass and horn. In one corner, was an old woman herding a basket of withered apples, in another was a half starved, ragged family, endeavouring to procure a few pence to pay for a night's lodging, by singing, in grand chorus, a satirical effusion on the new ambition which had possessed the cottage belles, of figuring in "drab

mantles and cassimer shawls." The space left between the booths and tables was crowded with country people, habited in various, and some in grotesque, costumes. A woman was seen with her husband's new felt hat, thrust, for the sake of convenience, down upon her own cap and ribbons. A man who had made a similar purchase, with a ludicrous economy, forbore to strip the article of the paper in which it was made up, and walked through the street, unconscious of his comical appearance, and unheeded by those around him.

As I passed onward, an eccentric, yet shocking spectacle, attracted my attention. Two hags, both of them palsied, ragged, and apparently needing only a moderate breeze to puff them into dust, were walking together near the channel of the street. They were conversing, but in so low and feeble a tone, that I could not gather the meaning of a single word, until I had drawn perfectly close to them. I then

discovered with astonishment that they were not only deeply engaged in reciprocal invective, but that the cause of controversy between them, was some question of the comparative attractions of both in their youthful days. It mattered little, one would have thought, which of the two possessed a superiority which had long ceased to be distinguishable. But they were not of this mind; and the contest of malice and envy between them, could not have been more bitter, if they had been still in full possession of their youth and all its charms.

"Where! ye tawny-faced hag!" said one, "where would you get a white skin, that had'nt the price of a ha'p'orth o' soap, to wash the black off o' ye'r yellow cheeks on a Saturday night, afther wiping your withered paws in them for want of a rubber, the whole week before?"

"I washed them," said the other woman,

who was supporting herself on a staff as she walked, and spoke with much difficulty, though with heartful bitterness and spleen, "I washed them in potatoe-water, and a grain o' male, a thing that was far wholesomer than soap suds, as them will tell you that has a right to know. Tawny face, inagh? My face then or now is fairer than yours, leather browed hound; if I had a setting-stick, I might * stick *skillanes* [seed-potatoes,] in the ridges o' your face, an ax no manure to make 'em grow aither."

"Gid out," replied the other (I forbear totranscribe the handsome epithets which with their discourse was interwoven and enriched). "Gidout o' my sight! You may remember well the day when there was a wager laid and won betune two gentlemen at the fair o' Killarney that I had the whitest skin of air a girl in the fair, an you, were

* Plant.

sitting oppozite 'em, on the shaft of a cart, with your two crooked eyes, as if you wor born in the middle o' the week, looking both ways for Sunday."

"I look," retorted the other, aroused from her exhaustion by this sneeringly fanciful allusion to a certain cast in the eyes, of which she was not innocent—"I look as straight as you did, the day in Brian Doherty's barn when we were both winnowing his corn, an he bid me lay the dildorn by, an give him my hand, an that I need never walk a-foot again, but that I'd have a horse fit for a lady to ride upon, if it was only to trot round the fire to look for the tongs. An you standen by, ready to burst, when you hard me refuse his offer, because I gave my hand an word to Dan Shanahan, long before."

"And what did you do with Shanahan, when you got him?" cried the beldam who appeared to be losing ground in the argument,

and therefore became the more exasperated. "You never stopt at him till you made him a murtherer, till he riz a hand against his own father, an for fear that wasn't enough, you took his son an brought him up to the gallows, where you'll folly him yourself before your doings are at an end, an there 'tis for you, as flat as a tinker's bib."

While she was making this speech, her antagonist moved closer, and laying her withered and trembling hand upon her shoulder, gave her a push, feeble, indeed, but yet sufficient to overset the balance of the last speaker, and leave her sprawling on her back in the mire, like a captured turtle. A crowd of boys and men who where passing joined in one shout of exulting admiration at this exploit. Cries of "Fair play! fair play!" passed round. The fair unfortunate was uplifted, and a ring made for the combatants, who, with eyes flashing a vain and useless fire, hands feebly clenched, lips panting from exhaustion, and

limbs every instant threatening to prove false to their charge, commenced a disgusting manual combat. Age and weakness, rather than any positive injury either could inflict, rendered the contest brief, and at the same time dangerous. Before I could descend from my horse, and penetrate the crowd, a second shout announced the discomfiture and fall of one of the parties.

I pressed my way through the crowd, continuing to hold my horse by the rein. A confused murmur of a deeper and more startling nature, succeeded the bursts of brutal laughter, which those persons uttered, who were proceeding a second time to raise the vanquished fair one from her ignoble position. As I looked upon the poor wretch, the cause of their sudden alteration of manner became apparent. The woman was dying. Her yellow and blood shot eye-balls turned in their sockets with an expression of strong agony; her wasted fingers were clenched, as if in pain, and with a short

groan, she expired in the arms of the populace, a martyr, in her old age, to a question of female vanity.

Vacillating and variable as the inclinations of an infant, the approbation and encouragement of the people were now turned into rage against the perpetrator of an outrage which they, more than she, had contributed to render fatal. She was struck, dragged to and fro, cursed and abused, and in spite of my efforts, would, I believe, have shared a worse fate than had befallen her unhappy rival, if at that instant one of the satellites of his worship, the Mayor, in all the awful authority of his cocked hat, blue civic livery, and shining yellow velveteen under garment, had not made his way through the mob, and striking back with his stick a country fellow who was in the act of throttling the old woman, took her into his own custody.

" I wisht I had you at the fair of Ballin-

gerry," said the smitten man, "I'd put a bulge in your dandy Caroline for you."

The man in office looked terrible, and shook the tassel of his cocked hat at the audacious speaker.

As he conducted his prisoner away, her eye met mine, and an instant recognition was the consequence. The disgraceful situation in which she was placed appeared for a moment to oppress her with shame and a consciousness of the justice of my former recrimination on the subject of her son's death. Hatred, however, speedily recovered its habitual mastery over the temper of this unfortunate, and she said, with a smile of bitter satisfaction,

"Has the ould woman's curse any virtue in it, Abel Tracy? I'm tould you proved it, since I was talking to you last."

I would not answer, but I looked steadfastly in her eyes, then back towards the corpse, and then to Heaven. She under-

stood the rebuke, and grew wild with fear and anger.

"'Twas all your doing," said she, "yours an' Dalton's, pah!" She stooped down, unable to find words to express all the violence of her dislike, and caught up, in her skinny fingers, a handful of the black mire at her feet. I was sufficiently prudent to decline any farther altercation with a person who was capable of employing so practical a species of invective. The inelegant missile, however, had already been discharged into the air, with all the feeble force which the hag was capable of using. Finding the spot evacuated where I should have been, it dispersed itself, and passing onwards, greeted, with an unwelcome violence, no less an object than the person of the Right Worshipful Monarch of the Corporation himself, who, attracted by the noise and crowd, was at that instant picking his steps over the pavement with a delicate and dignified pre-

cision, dressed in an irreproachable suit of black, with a magnificent gold chain and wand of state. The populace could not suppress a shout of laughter, at this untoward quid pro quo, though many were of opinion that it would go hard with the prisoner, in consequence.

While I stood holding the rein of my steed, and preparing to mount, I heard a mournful voice, close behind, repeat the last word of the murderess in an accent of deep and piercing anguish. " Dalton ! " she exclaimed, " ah, then, may Heaven remember you, Dalton, and your behaviour to me, when your last friend is forsaking you in your day of sorrow ! "

" Another victim ? " I said, turning round with an emotion of horror and of pity. I perceived by the light of a dim oil lamp, which had been just visited by the torch of the nimble-footed distributor of light, a poor woman seated in a corner, to which the diminished day-light could not penetrate. Her costume,

a grey cloak with the hood thrown over her head, showed that she belonged to that degraded and abandoned class of persons, who, in the provincial towns of Ireland, are accustomed to carry on in shame and in darkness, a traffick that, in London, walks as openly as innocence itself upon the noon-day street.

"Do you know any thing of Mr. Dalton, then?" I asked.

The woman raised her head and discovered a face which was emaciated from disease and famine. Her features had some traces of regularity, and even of a coarse beauty in their outline, but her eyes were dull and red, and her whole frame exhaled a strong odour of whiskey.

"Any thing of him?" she repeated, gazing on me.—"I know he promised to send one to me here to-night, with the price of something that would keep the breath in my body, but he deceived me," she added with a heavy sigh, "as he often done before."

"Where did you see him?" said I, more anxious to obtain the information on my own account, than on her's.

"Convenient to the bridge of Annacotty, at night-fall, yestherday evening, an' he coming in the Watherford road. I'll tell you where he is now, if it be a thing you want to know, so as you give me one two-pence for a glass o' whiskey. I'm ready to drop with the drooth."

"Poor creature!" said I, "poor lost wretch! would not a little substantial nourishment be more acceptable and needful to you than whiskey?"

"'Tis'nt so chape," was her reply, "an the benefit of it is longer coming round, an besides I'm used to the other, now. Who'd gi' me the price of a loaf when I find so few to lay out one tuppence itself with me?"

"Have you no friends?"

"Ask Dalton that," she replied with a painful laugh.—"I had friends once, an not so long ago naither. I left them one morning to go to the Races again' their bidding, an I met Dalton there, and I never seen 'em afther. See 'em? Oh, what am I saying? I did to be sure. Look at this penny-piece. Who gave me that, do you think? My brother! Just while ago (an I did'nt see him for seven years before,) he walked up there, an I axed him a charity before I knew who he was. Little he thought who he was talking to. Oh, Dalton, you have a dale to answer for! Quiet an' happy I was once by my brother's hearth-stone. There you found me, and here I am!"

"Why do you not make an effort to return to your people?"

"Ah, sir, the shame of it is too great. There is'nt one in our parish was ever guilty of the like except myself, an if I went back

now I should have to stand in a white sheet oppozzite the chapel doore, before all the girls that knew me in former times, an wouldn't spare me, may be, when my neck would be under their feet."

"You have just witnessed," said I, "a frightful instance of the effects of that foolish vanity; so that if you really feel your heart moved with so salutary an impulse, I caution you not to resist it from any selfish consideration, for it is a grace that should be treasured like gold by one in your condition. Poor mistaken girl! you are tender of your good name after a strange fashion! There may be shame in guilt, but, believe me, there is nothing but glory, and honour, and profit, and peace, in penitence."

"She paused for some moments. "I believe it's true for you, sir," she replied, "but supposing I wished it, how am I to make my way out?"

I deliberated a moment, and then suddenly turning, hailed a countryman, who was driving an empty *truckle* (or car supported on a wooden axle-tree) over the rough pavement. He sat, sidewise, on the horse's crupper, with his legs on the shaft, a cord whip in one hand, and the hair collar (or halter) in the other. He touched his hat, which was chalked all over with the account of the price, weight, beamage, &c. of the corn bags which he had disposed of that day at market, and pulled up his home-sick steed with a prolonged and forcible "Pruh—ru—h!"

"Hallo, honest man!"

"Here, sir, by your lave!"

"Do you go to-night through———?" (Sweet village! I will not name your name until I can interweave it with some more amiable association.)

"Go through it? No, I don't. But I go to it, an I come from it, and I live in the heart of it, and I never will deny it! Have you any

thing to say to itself or to me?" Here he flourished his whip about my head and broke into the popular chorus—

Oh, I never will deny
Till the day I die
That I was reared an Irish town boy,
And a rovin' sportin' hero!

"I have nothing to say to you," said I; "but here is a poor woman who wishes to take a seat in your empty car as far as that place. She will pay you any reasonable price for your care of her, and I am sure you're an honest man by your face."

"Not a rap, now. Indeed, she won't as much as one rap. But I'll take her out there for nothing, an welcome, if she's agreeable, and I'll break that man's head that says a word again her or any of *her people* while she's under my care, an what more can I say if she was my own sister?"

And Johnny Connell is tall and sthraight,
And in his limbs he is complate,
He'd fire a gun of any weight
From Garryowen to Thomond gate.

See there's the bags between her and the bottom o' the truckle, where she can sit as comfortable as if she was in a coach and six, without a pin difference."

"May you be blessed for this!" the poor woman exclaimed after I had placed a few ten-pennies in her hand, before the car drove away, "and if you want Dalton, as you were talking of him, you'll find him this night in A———."

I had already conjectured this, and was not sorry to hear my anticipations confirmed. Wearied as I was, and pained in mind and frame, the near prospect of an interview with my destroyer was sufficient to give new fire to my purpose. I remounted my steed, rode rapidly through the half ruined outlets of the city, and after less than two hours' moderate riding, heheld the black and

ivy-clad ruins and lonely river of the village at a short distance. Overpowered by the host of mournful recollections that crowded on my mind, as I approached this familiar scene, I drew up my horse for a moment on the echoing bridge, to contemplate its features at leisure.

They were revealed by a strong yet thin and mellowing glow of moonlight. On either side of the bridge, an old and ivied structure, the river swept beneath a handsome wood. A little further down, a considerable number of trees, standing on the level bank which was overflowed by by the spring tide, had their trunks washed by the waveless flood, and seemed to grow out of the stream. The faithful reflection of their foliage in the element, and of a few "reed girt" islets which broke the view at a greater distance; the solemn majesty of an extensive ruin which was contrasted, on one bank, to a modern edifice, and neatly disposed garden on the other; the broken silver of the moonlight which

was scattered over the scene, and the sudden and forcible contrasts of light and shade, completed, on this side, a picture which had an air of faëry elegance and splendour. A nearly similar landscape presented itself on the upper side of the bridge, with a distant plain (our ancient field of exercise) and ruminating cattle. The number of agitating events, which had crowded the brief interval, made it appear almost as long as that between age and youth.

The numerous lights which still burned in the windows of the village, furnished a sufficient intimation that I had arrived in good time for my purpose. I rode along the same street which I had passed in company with my now despised and forsaken corps of yeomanry a few months before. A few minutes brought me to the door of Mc Gawyl's public house, where I determined to make some enquiries before I should proceed further in my search.

Before the door, a number of cars, on their

way home from market, were thrown back on their shafts, while the horses were untackled and suffered to replenish their vigour by groping in bags tied about their heads, for a mouthful of corn at the bottom. Their masters, in the mean time, as I could make a sharp guess, from the sounds of mirth and jollity which proceeded from the interior, did not neglect themselves while they provided for the wants of their cattle. The sound of the bag-pipe, sorely maimed in its execution indeed, but yet sufficiently audible, caught my ear and awakened a startling association. A few quavers and nasal squeals were sufficient to enable me to recognize the favourite Alexander's March of our discarded piper, poor Fogarty. I dismounted, with an aching heart, for though I never relished Phil Fogarty's music very highly, the associations it brought to my recollection at this moment rendered it more deeply impressive than the sound of the

Ranz des Vaches in the dreaming ear of a long exiled Swiss.

Flinging the rein of my horse over the latch of the door, I entered the house, and approached the kitchen, in which the greater portion of the company were assembled. The vehement and expostulatory voice of the good host was heard, loud above the din, commanding,—but yet far from maintaining, that decorous order which he deemed most creditable to his house.

"Not a drop more, now, Brian," I heard him say to one countryman, who, with both arms laid lovingly over his shoulders, and a most engaging smile, was using his most convincing rhetoric to obtain an additional potation from his host. This, however, was contrary to the principle of Mc Gawyl, who used to take a pride in saying that although he had "kep house in the village for as good an better than eight years, there never was a man

drunk, that is to *say* drunk, inside his doore, excepting he got the mains of it somewhere else." The person who at this moment endeavoured to prevail on him to infringe his settled principle, was in that aërial state of mind which Mc Gawyl considered as the utmost possible limit to which sobriety could be extended. He was still, however, "not to say drunk."

"Not a drop more, Brian, now, an' don't ax me. You have enough already, an' more than you want."

"But, listen here!" he drew Mc Gawyl close, as if with the intention of communicating to him some important secret—— "whisper hether, I tell you! I want to be talking to you. 'Tis'nt the liquor at all—but—but you see, I have something to talk to you about. Look now, Thady Mc Gawyl, I love you! See now—take it from me, I'm your friend. Where's the man, gentle or simple, that 'll say a word

against you behind your back, an' I looking on?"

"I don't doubt it, Brian—I'm sure you're a good friend."

"Ah, putt, what! man, you don't know half. I declare, Thade, I love you, I declare now I'm fond o' you. Look, in my very heart within." As he said this, in order to testify the reality of his esteem, the wheedling Brian threw his arms about the neck of his friend, and their unshaven cheeks were joined in brotherly salutation.

"Come, get the drop o' drink now, and let us come here near the fire and talk a while," said the persevering customer.

"Now, Brian, I tell you, don't speak o' that at all, for it is a thing I can't do, and that's once for all."

"Murder an' ages! man," roared out Brian, now quite exasperated. "Is it to beg, borrow, or stale it from you I want? Hav'nt

I the money here to pay for that I take, like a gentleman?"

"Its all one. That's the very reason; you're *hearty* now, an' you dont care what you lay out, but you'd think defferent of me in the morning, when you'd put your hand in your pocket an' find your money gone, an' your landlord Mr. Dan Danaher calling on you for your rent."

"That's my business, and not your's."

"'Tis mine, too, Brian, for I'm your friend."

"Will you give the whiskey?"

"Take it for nothing any other time, but I won't rob you, now!"

"Isn't this a poor case? I tell you, you shall an' must give it, now!"

"I tell you I won't, again."

"You won't!"

"I won't."

"Is that the way of it? Very well, why! Look at this, now, Thade—I won't curse or

swear, but if ever I darken the thrashold o' your doore, again, you may call me an honest man!"

"As he said these words, he turned round in deep anger, struck his hat down upon his head, gathered his huge frieze great coat about him, tucked the tail of it up under his left arm, and strode out of the house with such an air of offence, that a stranger might suppose the friendship, so warmly insisted on a few moments before, to be now for ever broken. But the honest host, who had frequently experienced the brevity of those mortal enmities, and knew that he never yet lost a friend through his care of their interests, contented himself with saying, while he smiled and tossed his head,

"Wisha, then, joy be with you, but you're a foolish boy, and that's your name, this night."

He then proceeded to procure some degree of quiescence, among his guests, reminded them to take care of their passes, not to be caught

in the lurch like the yeomanry, when the "pathrowl" would be coming round. The "pathrowl," he said, should do their duty, and if a man got a pass and' lost it, and was brought to a pass about it, he had nobody to blame but himself. He concluded a most loyal speech with a high eulogium on the Police which contrasted in a very singular manner with the language he had used to us a few months previous. But it was part of his character, on which he piqued himself, to exercise a continual kind of independent .and undisguised treason of this nature towards all parties.

Turning round and walking to the door of the shop (or bar, as it is called in England), he suddenly encountered me in the passage, and started back with as lively an expression of terror and astonishment as if he had bolted upon a ghost. I beckoned him aside, and laying my hand firmly on his arm to intimate caution, I asked :—

"Is Mr. Dalton at present in the village? Make no noise, but answer me quietly."

"Oh, murder in Irish! Mr. Tracy, is that yourself in airnest? Well, well! see this!"

"Is he in the village?"

"He is—and in the house here this minute, above stairs in the parlour. That is to say, he is not in the house now, for he was called to Matty O'Decimum, the tithe proctor, a while ago, but his things are above, an he'll be back in a jiffy."

"That is the very thing. Lead me to the room in which he was sitting, and for your life don't say a word of my being there."

He looked at me during several moments with his mouth open, as if endeavouring to form a conjecture on my intentions.

"I'm thinking, Mr. Tracy," he said, assuming an air of sudden and smiling frankness,—"that yourself and Mr. Dalton are but poor friends now, and that may be 'tis some harm you'd have in your mind again' him, the Lord save us!"

"Be assured it is no such thing. Let us not be disturbed, Mc Gawyl. You will be near enough in the kitchen to prevent evil, if you should hear any thing from the room to excite a suspicion of danger."

"Oh, very well, sir, very well. I'll do your bidding. Mary Dehahunty!" he called, in a rough, loud voice.

"Going,* " said a shrill female voice from the kitchen.

Presently there appeared at the kitchen door a thin-faced, unwashed girl, just waked up from a chimney corner slumber, with a brown stuff gown having the tail fastened up about the waist, bare feet, in the balls and ankles of which Nature had been liberal, and even lavish of material, and with her uncombed and straggling hair confined, with a careless but by no means becoming negligence, in a black leathern thong.

* That is to say—"*coming*."

" Go up stairs an' show this gentleman into Mr. Dalton's room—an' as soon as you do, go to bed at once, for I'll want you to be up at the first light in the morning, to send to Rathkeale for a keg o' whiskey."

" Are you sure he'll return?" I asked in a whisper, as I followed my drowsy conductress up the single flight of stairs.

" Oh, I'll be bound he will," said Mc Gawyl, " as sure as day. Friends or foes," I heard him mutter to himself as I passed on—" friends, or foes, pace or war, whatever way the battle runs, there's no fear the country will lose a good member in either o' ye. Indeed, I wouldn't begridge just such a little difference between ye as would enable some honest people to come by their own again."

I entered the room alone, and took my place in a dark corner where a recess had been made in the wall for a cupboard which was not yet completed. A large coat of Mc Gawyl's hung from

a rack above, so as to conceal my person as perfectly from the view of any one sitting at the table as if I occupied a place in another room. At the same time, not a sound or movement could escape my own observation in this.

Here, while I stood awaiting in silence and in the agony of a deep suspense the arrival of my destroyer, and the departure of all whose presence might interfere with my design, a scene of atrocity was laid open to my view, in comparison with which all that I either had learned or suspected of Dalton's magisterial profligacy was venial, and worthy rather of pity than reproof.

CHAPTER XIV.

The apartment was the same in which our heroic corps of yeomanry had consumed so merry an evening on the night of the review. The print of Moses in the bulrushes still hung above the wooden chimney piece, and a tattered, leather bottomed chair was thrown away at the end of the table where I supposed that bad man had been sitting. A pair of candles burned on the table ; the

snuffs, for want of trimming, gathering to a pall above the flame, and throwing a flikering gloom through the apartment. On the table were laid a valise, some loose papers and a pair of pistols. These last I took the precaution to remove, and had scarcely done so when I heard, the voice of their owner at the foot of the stairs. The sound of mirth and music were hushed at his entrance, as the tumult of a village school is suddenly sunk on the approach of the stern-browed-holder of the rod.

Those only who have been basely ruined, and whom the demon of revenge has tempted with an opportunity, can imagine what I felt at this moment. The revulsion of strong anger, which passed through my mind and frame, and which in an instant effected a complete alteration in my wishes and intentions, completely proved the rashness of entrusting my unregulated passions with so perilous an occasion.

"Hound of destruction!" I said, in a thick and half-suppressed whisper. "I have kennelled you at last! Let it be said that my veins were filled with the blood of a coward; that I had more sense of wrong than you of honesty; that I was a tame and cringing dupe, as void of feeling as of principle, a proper butt for schooling the wit of a knave, if you escape me this night, without learning the full measure of your injustice and making me the reparation I shall require!"

I was interrupted by the entrance of two persons. One was Dalton, dressed as I had first met him, in a white coat with spatter-dashes covered with mud, and an open book and pencil in his hand. That settled, blasting smile which I had before remarked as a distinguishing characteristic of his countenance, was still shedding a bale-fire light over his features.

"Come in, come in, and shut the door,"

he said, addressing a tall man in a frieze riding coat and standing collar. He then threw himself into the chair, and glanced his eye over his note book, while his companion took his place modestly at the end of the table, where he stood, with his hat in his hand, awaiting the pleasure of his patron.

"Five and ninepence a week they have allowed you, Mihil," said the latter commencing from the day of the information against the Hennessys."

"Five an' nine-pence, sir? Why then it's little enough, is'nt it, Mr. Dalton?"

"It all depends upon your own diligence, Mihil. Stir yourself and look about you, and you may double it, may-be, before long. Are you sure none of the lads below stairs recognized you?"

"Oh, not one of 'em, sir. I kep the collar up about my ears, so that they could'nt tell, from Adam, who is it was there."

"So much the better, for there should not be the slightest appearance of any understanding between you and our people, or the whole scheme would be destroyed at once. Well, did ye swear many these two last weeks?"

"A power. The whole country is running into it with their mouths open, like ducks to a grain of oats."

The Magistrate listened like a sportsman receiving a description of a good *cover*, while he touched his lip with the tip of his Bramah pencil and prepared to write.

"Well, come, give me the names of your recruits."

"I heard one of 'em spake of a place where they had as good as fifteen stand of arms together one night last week."

"Who was that?"

"Any thing for the liquor! That's the way with the Gutyragget boys. Distress and

hardship and the want of meat and drink drives a deal of 'em into the business. But the whiskey finishes the job for 'em, when once they're in. The whiskey destroys more souls in Ireland than either rope or gun."

"Come, you scoundrel," said Dalton, "do you think I am to sit here listening to you moralizing on the state of the country? What were the names of the men who took the croppie oaths, I ask you again?"

"I ax your worship's pardon if I done any-thing contrary, but I was only saying that if it was a thing a man had a trifle to throw away on 'em by way of a treat, as it were, what a sight he could get out of them!"

"I understand. You want money from me before you will condescend to reveal. For a ruffian who knows that his life depends upon the breath of my lips, you are a daring fellow. But I like your audacity. It gives

me some promise that you will not flinch when your fear clashes with your interest on some future possible occasion. There is a sovereign for you."

"Long may your honour live! I'd sooner take a sovereign o' your money any day than five pound of another man's."

"That's a confounded falsehood, and you know it is, you rascal. But let me hear your names."

The spy accordingly furnished, with much precision, a list of names and residences which were copied with various accompanying circumstances of indentification, by the Chief Magistrate.

"Shanahan!" he suddenly exclaimed, starting with a look of strong interest, as he repeated one of the names—"Was *he* sworn? Did *he* join ye?"

"A! fast bound as a spancelled goat. Oh, that's a wild, tearing boy, that won't be long

without getting himself a lodging free of expense."

"I am glad of it—I'll plague the dog!—Shanahan—Morty Shanahan of Abel Tracy's farm you mean, don't you?"

"No, I don't, but Tom Shanahan of Rath-Danaher in the mountains, above."

"Psha!" Dalton exclaimed, flinging down his book in disappointment, "you are a block-head. You knew I only cared about *one* Shanahan."

"Oh, then, I'm afeerd it is in vain for us to hope to make any thing of him.—He is too regular, too watchful. Unless it were a thing one could carry a point, by dropping an old pistol or a thing o' the kind behind his doore."

Dalton here fixed upon the speaker one of those piercing looks by which he was frequently apt to betray himself, and to put others out of countenance. Apparently, however, he found the leathern physiognomy of the informer to be com-

posed of no penetrable stuff, for he returned to the contemplation of his pocket book without making any reply.

"And this is all?" he said, after the spy had concluded his information.— "Did you hear nothing since about that strange tall yellow man?"

I listened here with a strong interest.

"He's rather out o' my line," said the ruffian, "being a gentleman, and never mixing with any o' the lower order. No one could tell me any thing about him; nor was there one in the place that knew any more of him than I did myself."

"'Tis very strange. A person of his singular appearance coming suddenly into the country, at so suspicious a conjuncture, without a single respectable acquaintance, and without, as you say, any apparent want of money."

"Want? He rowls upon it. He's as off hand with a guinea or a pound note as another would be with a sixpence."

"Does he exercise any remarkable liberality amongst the people?"

"He laves his token afther him, wherever he goes, and them that meet are sorry to part him. He does'nt to say fling his money away, as a gentleman should, but he gives it in plenty, and where he sees 'tis wanting."

Dalton here wrote for a moment in his note-book, while this disinterested observer of human character followed up his communications.

"The nearest guess I could make at the business was this. You know Mr. Purtill of the mountains, behind?"

"Well? I do—He owes me money."

"That Purtill, I'm tould, had a brother here in the country before he went abroad; an having a difference with him about some part o' the farm, I hear the brother went off greatly vexed, to the paythriots in South America, where they said after that he made a power o' money. Well, sir, you see, I'm thinking 'tis

like enough this tall yellow man is neither more nor less than Purtill's brother come home again; and having the spleen in still again this man, he does'nt like to show himself at the house, but prefers going roving about the country, to see what changes would be in the place since he left it."

"Your conjecture is a bold one, and shows genius," said Dalton, after musing for a moment.

I was tempted, for my own part, to accord it the additional praise of strong probability, as I doubted not the subject of their conversation was the same individual whom I had seen in the Abbey, and in the *hack*, near Shanahan's cottage, and the feeling of recognition, which then startled me, might be accounted for by some family resemblance to my brother yeoman.

"Besides, he goes to mass," continued the spy.

"Indeed?"

"Regular. Although the priest itself, nor

any body else in the parish, can't tell you his name."

"If your conjecture should be correct," said Dalton, "that goose Abel Tracy will be worth a second plucking before long. I can foresee the whole train of events which the acquisition of this unexpected acquaintance must occasion. His wealth will be shared with his brother, and the brother will propose for, and be accepted by, Ellen Tracy, or rather by her mercenary father. I should be glad of it, for now that I have done with that gull and day-dreamer, the father of the girl, some piece of good fortune would be necessary to prevent his becoming troublesome. Hark! Did you not hear a noise?"

"There's a great draught in the chimney to-night, sir. May be that's it."

"No. I believe it came from those fellows below stairs. How dim these candles burn! I suppose I might look in vain for such a luxury as a pair of snuffers in Mc Gawyl's house. Come,

use the tips of your horny fingers, and take off that thief in the wick. Set a thief to catch a thief, you know, is an old proverb."

"But I was saying, sir," said the spy, after a sycophantic laugh, while he snuffed the candle, as he was directed, with his finger and thumb, threw the burning particle on the floor, and rubbed it out with his huge brogue—"If the foreign gentleman have a spleen in again his brother, how is it possible that he should ever be the better by him?"

Dalton smiled for some moments on the speaker, considering, with that curiosity and interest which his natural talent made him capable of feeling, the causes which made forgiveness a virtue so incomprehensible to this ruffian.

"You know not, fool that you are," he said, "accustomed to seize with an appetite, as rapacious as hunger itself, on all possible opportunities of satiating your evil feelings—educated from your infancy in the belief that revenge and

outrage are as honourable as they are delicious—and beholding all persons of your own class impressed with the same conviction—you know not that there are spirits in the higher places of the world, to whom the forgiveness of injury, and the conquest of their own selfish and violent passions, affords a pleasure more exquisite and more delicate than any which you can find in the indulgence of your coarse and brutal antipathies. A spirit of this order would no sooner forego the heavenly, sweet, and heroic glory of a religious forgiveness for the fleshly satisfaction of a common revenge, than a glutton would lay aside a turtle of Blanco, and gorge himself with the carrion-garbage of a vulture. But I waste my words on air. You do not understand me, nor am I anxious that you should."

"Wisha, then, you tell no lie in that, sir, any way," said the spy, who was listening to this speculation of his patron's with open mouth

and eyes, "except a man was *made* of English he could n't well understand that. But if it be charging revenge again me your honour is, I have nothing to say to it. If a man lets me alone, I let him alone; but if it be a thing he'll be conthrairy to me, take it from me I'll be conthrairy to him in my turn, if I can."

"That is the spirit I would have you preserve," said Dalton. "Begone, and act upon it. You have done this week's business indifferently well. Improve upon it, and you will improve your own fortunes in proportion. Wheedle, *blarney*, coax, gull, protest, swear, leave no means untried—let no opportunity escape—keep your eyes open—your ears cocked—justify the character I have given of you, and prove that you are active, loyal, and intelligent."

The informer made a short, but deep, bow, to every component part of the above sentence, and left the room with many pro-

testations of diligence and devotion; while Dalton cautioned him to elevate the collar of his riding coat as he descended, so as that he should not be recognized by Mc Gawyl's guests. The length of this knave's interview made me fear that Dalton's levee might be prolonged to an inconvenient hour. My long ride, and the almost entire abstinence of two days from either food or slumber made this reflection an unwelcome one, and the more especially so as my standing position had begun to weary me. I would have waited however until my limbs had stiffened into marble, and Mc Gawyl's niche had been graced with a statue, rather than forego the opportunity for which I thirsted. Besides, I felt my interest divided and yet deepened by my accidental initiation into the mysteries of the atrocious policy of this person.

He resumed his writing, and was so completely absorbed in the occupation that he did

not perceive for several minutes that a second courtier had entered the room and was awaiting his leisure. This person was of an appearance and manner very dissimilar to the former. He was of a low and stunted figure, with a cocked nose, eyes set far apart in his head, a greasy white frock coat with huge bone buttons, black leggings on his feet, and a chequered straw hat, in his hand. There was in his look and manner a certain degree of cringing meanness and servility that was very hurtful to the pride of the spectator. I recognized him as the same scoundrel whom I had bribed with a few pence to burn his summons some months before at Cushlane-Beg. He had become notorious shortly after in the country as a common informer, but of a flight somewhat lower than the person who had just preceded him, and who, indeed, was a genius in his line, distinguished alike by craft and diligence. He earned a moderate

livelihood by his exertions to preserve his Majesty's game laws from violation, which he did by a peculiarly ingenious expedient. This was no other than swearing informations against all persons who could afford, but yet forbore from economy or any other motive, to take out a game license. By convicting all, the innocent as well as the guilty, this prudent person not only put a handsome sum (his share of the divided fines) into his own pocket, but effected a great general good.— He encreased the public revenue,. supported a thriving family, and convinced the middlemen of the country that it was altogether useless to deprive themselves of so wholesome an amusement, since their self-denial was likely to be even more expensive than their self-indulgence. Prudence indeed appeared to be his great characterestic, and if it prevented his ever achieving any bold or audacious piece of knavery, it at least kept his feet in a

safe path. He took care to provide against any chance of counter-testimony by laying the information so long after the alleged period of the offence that none could be procured. His talents, humble as they were, recommended him to the notice of Dalton, who kept a kind of nursery of scoundrels, and put them to use according as they became necessary to his purposes; purposes which required the agency of knaves in all the gradations of depravity.

"Well, who are you?" said Dalton, suddenly raising his head and staring the new comer in the face.

"'Tis I, sir, Maney Kennedy, plase your honour," the man replied, ducking his head two or three times, and grinning in mingled fear and courtesy.

"Oh, Maney, my little terrier, is that you? Well, did you take my message to O Decimum, the tythe proctor?"

"I did, sir, plase your honour," with another duck of the head, "an' tis the answer he made me to come with me himself, an' he's below in the parlour, waiten to spake to your honour, sir. I was afeerd to say a word to him about the bizness when I heerd he was coming to your honour, in dread I might spoil the bizness."

"You are a cautious, fine fellow. You are always 'afeerd,' and, 'in dread,' but your fear is a brilliant fear, and your dread is the dread of a man of intellect. Did your prudent fear enable you to do any thing with respect to my process against Mr. Paul Purtill?"

The "little terrier" of the Magistrate's human pack twisted his wiry countenance into an expression of excelling shrewdness at this question, shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head with much archness.

"Your honour never gav me a more contrairy job than that yet. I was afeerd I never could do it, for Mr. Purtill is a wild jettleman

that doesn't much care what he does, an' he has a strong back in the boys of his neighbourhood, who won't see any branch o' the family *insulted.** Well, I was very unaisy in myself, for I remembered well that Tim Ready, a man that would make four of myself, tried to sarve a process on the same gentleman, and was fairly murthered three times running (heaven save the mark) upon his lawn out before the hall doore, an' sure, says I to myself, if he was'nt able for 'em, what could I do? lord sa' me, says I. Well, what did I do? Easy now a minute, an' I'll tell your honour the whole story. I got up in the morning, to-day morning, an' I said to myself, an' I drawin' on my stockings, 'Now,' says I, 'Kennedy, mind yourself. You know,' says I, 'that Mr. Purtill is no child's play to have to do with, an' if you don't take care o' yourself, I'm afeerd—I'm afeerd' says I, 'something that's not good will happen you. You know,'

*Applied to for payment of a debt.

says I, 'he 's up to all the law in Europe, an' keeps no man servant, only one old woman an' a Newfoundlan' dog, an' lives by himself in a small cottage in the mountains, were he's ever an' always on his guard again all manner o' writs, an' summonses, an' processes, an' law papers of every nature. So take care o' yourself, I advise you,' says I, 'an' look about you, or you may have a quare story to tell before night,' says I. Well what did I do? I got an old bag, an' rowled a couple o' sugans* about my ankles, an' put an old tattered coat belonging to a bucaugh [lame beggar] in the neighbourhood upon my back, an' I stuck a short pipe in the side o' my mouth, and thrun (threw) the bag, with a few praties in the bottom of it, up over my shoulder, an' off I set to the mountains, taking a blackthorn stick in my hand, in dread the Newfoundlan' dog would be conthrairy with me. So when I came a near the place, in

* Hay ropes.

dread they'd suspect something wrong if I went sthraight to the house, I called at a few o' the neighbour's cabins, axing a charity (I have a good face for it, they tell me, sir)," here he made another grin—" an' done my business so well that it was'nt long till I had the bag a' most full. Well, in dread it would be late with me, I took a short cut across the fields, an' waited a while behind the haggart till I seen the ould woman going down the lawn for a can o' spring water, an' the dog afther her. I got up: an', afeerd that Mr. Purtill, if he saw a paper in my hand, would slap the doore in my face before the process could be duly sarved, I rowled an' twisted it up tight, an' putt it in my pocket, an' came and knocked at the hall-doore. There being no one in the house, Mr. Purtill himself kem (came) an' opened it. 'Well, what do you want? there's nothing here for you,' says he. " Eyah then, wisha, nothen in the wide world, sir,' says I, 'only I thought may be the ould

woman would be within, that she'd putt this bit of a match in the ashes for me, till I'd light my pipe again the road.' 'Oh, if that's all,' says he, 'I'll do it myself my poor man, an welcome,' says he. So he tuk the paper to light it. 'Wisha, then, the heavens bless your honour,' says I, 'an' mind, Mr. Purtill, you have it, now.' 'What have I?' says he, 'Mr. Dalton's process,' says I; 'an he expects you'll answer it a' Monday.' Well, I never seen a man in such a born rage. He hullooed the dog an' the people afther me, but there was nobody in hearing; and I *thrun* my fine bag o' praties, more was the pity, upon the gravel (afeerd they'd be too heavy for me), and I cut, and I run, an' I pelted away over the rocks an' stones, hedges and ditches, driving an' pushing for the bare life, until I came to the head o' the sthreet above, where I was tould your honour was stopping at Mc Gawyl's, here."

"You have done your part like a second

Ulysses," said the delighted Dalton;—"your caution becomes not only politic, but inventive. As Pyrrhus said of the Romans, I may say of my adherents, that with such a pack I would undertake to hunt down the whole world, not to speak of a puny district like Munster."

"If t's talking o' my being a *Roman*,* your honour, is," said Kennedy, who understood only one word in the above speech, "I did'nt go to Mass these six years, nor to a priest to my juty since I was the heighth of that.'"

"Don't take the trouble to vindicate your character, my good Maney," said the Chief Magistrate, half smiling.—"I did not mean to cast any aspersion upon it. My trusty Cineas, I have another occasion to exercise your craft and industry. You must serve a writ on this Purtill, next week, and bring him into the goal of Limerick."

"Body an bones, sir?"

* Roman Catholic.

"Body and bones, as you say."

"I'm afeerd—I'm afeerd that will be a very cross bizness, sir. But I'll try it, I'll watch my opportunity."

"Do so—and hark you! As you go down stairs, you may tell the Police they need not wait, I will ride home alone to night. Here's something for your trouble."

"Long may your honour live!"

"Send O'Decimum up to me, and go at once. Stay!"

The "terrier" stopped suddenly at the door, between which and the table, during the last few minutes, he had been starting backward and forward, like a frightened hare, in his excessive anxiety to obey his patron with promptitude.

"Tell me, Maney," said the latter, in a low, whispering voice—"did you take the money to that poor girl, as I bade you?"

"I went there, plase your honour."

"That's right. I thought I had placed the poor creature out of the reach of want—but her misery was shocking."—

"I went there, sir, as I was saying, but I could'nt give her the money, for I found her talking to a strange gentleman, Mr. Abel Tracy, of Cushlane-beg, that was."

"Abel Tracy!"

"Abel Tracy, sir."

"Impossible, fool! He does not even know that Shanahan ever *had* a sister."

"Far be it from me to contradict your honour. But I'm sure he could'nt but know it the time I saw him standing near Baal's-bridge, in Limerick, talking to that woman—when he tuk a place in a car for her, an sent her home to her own people."

"This is strange! this is quite unexpected! Abel Tracy out, and well! I know the man, he has heard something. This is very annoying. Go along, Maney, and remember what I have

told you.—This is altogether sudden and unlooked for—Go—and hark you!—You may desire the Police to remain. I have altered my intention of riding home unattended."

Kennedy left the room, and Dalton, unable to return with so easy a mind, as heretofore, to his book of memoranda, remained gazing with some perplexity of countenance, on the blazing turf fire, until his next courtier, O'Decimum, made his appearance. I groaned in heart when I saw him enter, and endeavoured to summon patience to support this new interruption.

This person seemed to be of a rank, and appearance, rather superior to the other two. He was of a stout figure—which was wrapped up in a large dark coloured great coat, buttoned tight up to the chin, and wore a smooth yellow wig, under which a few locks of black hair were still apparent. His face, which was red and well nourished, had a slight shade of clerical gloom and trimness, the effect, perhaps, of his constant

intercourse with, and imitation of, the tythe proprietors, under whom he acted. Obeying a slight action of Dalton's, he seated himself on a corner of a chair at about two feet distant from the table, smoothed the front of his wig over his brow, and waited for the Chief Magistrate to open the conversation.

"Well, O'Decimum, what about my tythes?"

"Oh, bother to 'em; for tythes, I do'nt know what to do with 'em; I valued 'em; I could do no more. There's the returns."

He took from his breast a bundle of papers tied with red tape, and laid them on the table, after which, he hung his hat on his knee, and continued:

"There's one Connolly, a strong* farmer a very strong, snug man, has fifty acres there, an' he objected to the valuation, as all of 'em

* Comfortable, easy in his circumstances.

did, all of 'em high an' low protested again' the valuation, but he tuk it up in airnest an' vowed an' swore he never would pay a fraction of my valuation. Hih! indeed! 'Mr. Dalton,' says he 'is lay impropriator, an' has a right to the tythes, no doubt, but you're a rogue an' a publican,' says he, (hih! indeed!) an' I'll not submit to be tyrannized over. This is the way I'll prove it,' says he, 'I'll pay in kind. There's my corn, an' my hay, an' my potatoes, an' all upon the ground. I'll lave the tythes of all upon the land, an' let Mr. Dalton draw 'em, himself, or let 'em rot where they are. An' as for you, you imposing scoundrel,' says he, 'for one brass farthing I'd kick you out upon the high road.' Hih! indeed! I wisht I had evidence, when he called me an imposing scoundrel. I'd larn him another story."

"Connolly? Well, we can't help that. The fellow knows he has the law on his side, and I may find an opportunity to make that

matter even with him. But, I am sure, you, a respectable man of your kind, have no right to sit down quietly under the imputation of being a rogue and a scoundrel."

"High! indeed."

"Very well. I see you have the proper feeling of resentful indignation, and I will show you how it is to be indulged. They all cry out against your valuation of their property, and say that it is exorbitant. They would thus insult you and wrong me at the same time. But I have got the power now to do us both justice, and it shall be done. I cannot afford to be merciful. I have too much occasion for money. Would you suppose it? I was master of two thousand pounds within the last week, and I have not now fifty sovereigns in the world."

My heart sunk with a heavy and horrid feeling of despair, as I heard those words. But I was determined not to believe them.

I would not believe it possible that my exertions to save myself from shame, to rescue my plundered child from misery, and the agony of a disappointed hope, should be in vain, and that I should yet be compelled to hug this uttermost ruin, which I had fled so fast and far to avoid. I set my teeth hard, and longed eagerly and wickedly for the departure of the stranger.

"But this is what I would propose," continued Dalton, who was not economical of his confidence to those creatures whom he had in his power, and whose characters, moreover, were of that peculiar notoriety which would render their treachery a matter of trivial consequence. "Listen to these people," he said, "seem to be touched by their remonstrances. Drop a few hints of your obligations, and the impossibility of your showing more lenity while you are left unintimidated. Do you understand?

O'Decimum, who was a good slow hound, sure and untiring, but by no means one of the most sagacious and quick-scented animals of the Chief Magistrate's pack, gaped a silent, but most expressive, negative.

"Are we to saze in the mean while, on the lands o' Ballyneagh, for their tythes?"

"Undoubtedly."

"They have'nt a ha'p'ny, now, except we sould the beds from under 'em."

"Sell the beds, then, by all means. I tell you I cannot afford to be merciful. I did'nt pay parson Dowdy to have the pleasure of making these fellows a free gift. Go, now, O'Decimum, and remember what I have told you. I must have money wherever or how ever it is to be procured. I want to send my boy, Henry Dalton, to England, to leave him at a fashionable seminary, and I am resolved that his young and sensitive mind, (for it is more sensitive, more delicate than the shyness

of a virgin,) I am resolved that it shall undergo none of those mortifying slights from the inability to maintain the station to which I lift him, which are so blasting to the early dignity of the human character. But good night to you, I have something more to do before I sleep."

"I wish you a good night's rest, sir," returned the slow hound, as he left the kennel, "I will take care of every thing. An imposing scoundrel! Kick me out on the high road," I heard him continue to mutter as he descended, "hih, indeed!"

CHAPTER XV.

He departed, and others succeeded him. It would be a wearying task to present a faithful detail of the various characters, the petty schemes of violence and injustice which filled up the Magistrate's time for the next hour. Let me say, in few words, that the time, long as it appeared, rolled away at length and I was left alone with my enemy.

"Mc Gawyl!" I heard him call from the

door, as he followed the last hound of his extensive and well selected pack to the head of the stairs.

"Meaning *me?*" cried the host from beneath.

"Yes, you, you Papist. Is there any one else waiting to see me?"

"Nobody else, plase your honour. Unless you'd have myself go up an' look at you for a while."

"Let me not be disturbed, then," said Dalton, unless I call. "I have some business to do, and hark you! Tell that piper, who has been squealing like a choked cat this hour past, that I'll put a slit in his bag if he is not quiet."

He closed the door, locked it, and walked to the table.

Exhausted in all my frame by the long continuance of my voluntary durance, I had almost begun to fear that my patience or

my opportunity would fail me. When Dalton turned the key in the lock, the blood gathered on my heart and caused it to bound within my breast with a violence proportioned to the agony of the suspense which I had undergone. I waited to see him slowly and considerately resume his chair before the flickering turf fire, place the key on the chimney piece, and recommence the perusal of his note-book, before I ventured to make a single movement. He, who has seen a great river dammed in its course, and forced to accumulate its waters in one reservoir, and who has beheld that obstruction suddenly removed, and the bulky stream possessing itself with a treble violence of its ancient channels, may imagine what the condition of my feelings was at this conjuncture.

I paused however for some moments in order to collect the subject of my proposed

remonstrance, before I made my presence known. I had need of little reflection for the purpose. My wrongs came flitting by me in swift and stimulating succession. My former peace and happiness, my long anxieties, my ruined reputation with my old adherents—my blighted ambition—my dowerless child—my alienated home—my murdered wife—my own ready confidence—the hollow and wanton treachery of my betrayer—all rushed hurriedly and yet distinctly upon my mind. The enemy of souls omitted no circumstance of the exciting catalogue, no whispered recollection that could make mischief certain. A single steady glance at the past and present was sufficient to send me

— mounted
Upon my injuries

against my unconscious and unsuspecting ruiner.

"He has a child," I said, within myself, "and they say that even the most relentless and selfish natures are capable of a generous emotion when they are assailed on the ground of sympathy. If he should be impenetrable to that, however, I will take another tone, and wring from his terror the justice which his humanity may refuse to render."

I looked upon him, as these reflections passed through my mind. It seemed as if some deep and absorbing train of meditation were passing through his own mind at the same instant. He laid his book aside, and remained gazing fixedly on the burning fire. Soliloquies are seldom uttered in real life, but I could almost read the changes of his thought upon his countenance strongly illumined as it was by the great light. At first, he seemed to meditate some plan of vengeance, for I saw his lips contract and settle

into that taunting smile which was seldom absent from his features. Then it appeared as if a startling doubt arose, and a sudden perspiration covered his forehead. Unconscious, now, of an observer, it astonished me to see how lucid and easily penetrable was that countenance which when shadowed by the veil of hypocrisy was as illegible as the front of Mokanna. His brows were gathered with an expression of pain and anxiety, he waved his hand impatiently, and strove to dispel the thought by an exclamation of peevish contempt; but it seemed to fasten upon his spirit in his despite. The knave rendered glory to virtue in his hour of reflection and privacy. I saw that peace was a blessing that never lighted on his eye-lids.

He was endeavouring to compose his mind to a short slumber in the great chair which he occupied, but I interrupted the intention.

CHAPTER XVI.

I PUT my shoes from off my feet (oh, *not* that it was holy ground!), and approaching the table with a soft and noiseless footstep, remained close to the side of the magistrate, contemplating him in his fancied security, with that fulness of satisfaction, which makes us pause on the verge of fruition, in order to prolong the enjoyment of an assured expectance. Turning round in his chair and lifting, with an effort, his heavy

eyelids, he suddenly encountered my figure, half concealed by the light of the candle which burned between us. At first it seemed as if he thought the appearance was a cheat of his half dreaming imagination, for his eyes became dilated and fixed in a stare of mingled wonder and inquiry. He held the candle high above his head, and becoming convinced of the reality of his vision, remained gazing on me in an attitude of sudden terror, which his presence of mind could not enable him to disguise.

"Dalton," said I, "I congratulate you on your advancement."

"Abel Tracy!"

"Yes, Abel Tracy. Your occupations did not allow you to visit your old friend since your good fortune, so he has come to visit *you.*"

He cast an apprehensive and eager glance toward the table while I spoke, and started in renewed fear.

"They are safe," I said, smiling on him, "I have taken the precaution to remove them. I feared, Dalton, that they might make mischief between us. I feared them, both as a temptation and a hinderance. We are both unarmed now, let there be no violence between us. Heaven help my wandering brain! I have not now that government of my passions which I was wont to have. A sudden temptation finds not my reason so watchful and so strongly fortified, as in the days before I knew you, Dalton. I wish to speak with you, and nothing more."

He seemed to recover something of his self-possession as I spoke, although confusion and fear still remained visibly impressed on his features and demeanour.

"This was unexpected," said he, "it is so inexplicable. How did you enter?" He looked at the key which lay on the chimney piece.

"I have been waiting your leisure," I re-

plied, pointing coolly to the recess; "in that cornerduring the entire evening."

His face altered its complexion from yellow to deep crimson, and again to frigid paleness.

"I thought," he continued, after a pause, "that you were too ill to be seen. I am glad, I rejoice, to see you recovered."

"What a foul lie that is! Do you not blush to contradict yourself so shamefully?" I paused, pressed my hand upon my brow, and arrested the torrent of rage which was bursting forth. "Forgive me!" I continued, "my passion will get the better of me. My misfortunes have quite destroyed my temper. I wish not to insult you, and have only one small request to make."

"I can bear much from you, Tracy. I know how strange my conduct must appear in your eyes, but when you shall have heard me explain——"

"I understand. But it is altogether unne-

cessary. I only wish that you would listen to me for a few moments. You may have heard, that after the night of Mary's murder——"

"Poor, sweet woman!"

"Aye, poor, sweet woman. Well, after her murder,"—(I felt it almost impossible to refrain from striking the hypocrite to the ground), "on the very evening of her murder, an ejectment was served, and keepers put on our property at Cushlane-Beg. Every thing we possessed in the world was snatched away from us. I was unable, from my illness, to attend in my own person, to the disposal of my affairs, and when I rose from my sick bed, I found myself a pauper. I have now nothing in the world. My children are depending on the kindness of friends, and my young and gentle daughter, whom I robbed of her marriage dowry, in order to accommodate you, is left in danger of sharing my poverty, and losing for

ever her present hope of happiness. That event would make me mad."

Dalton appeared greatly perplexed. "Any thing that it is in my power to do, Tracy," he said, in some hesitation, "you may instantly command."

"You can do every thing," I replied. "Hear me, Dalton. I ask not from you the fulfilment of those hopes with which you deluded me—I require not that you should make good the false and treacherous promises by which you duped me; I was the fool of my own credulity, the gull of my own selfish desires; I take the responsibility of my own well merited destruction upon my own guilty hands. I inquire not the motives of your conduct, I forgive, from my soul, the evil you have brought upon my own head: from this hour you never shall be troubled with reproach or question on that subject. But I have no power to remit so easily the wrongs you have inflicted through me, on others.

For these it is my duty to demand redress, and it is well for you and for me, Dalton, that the redress I ask is within your power."

"What injury, what redress, do you speak of?"

"You will be astonished to learn how moderate it is. You may remember that, trusting in your honour, (like a fool, as you have justly named me,) and calculating on a brilliant remuneration, I lent you, when I was low in funds and could but ill afford it, a sum of money. It was the wedding portion of my daughter who is—was—on the eve of marriage, and who entrusted her little fortune to my keeping, supposing, silly one, that it could not be safer than in her father's hands. Pay me that money back, that I may restore it to my child, and let us part, as we have met. It is a trifle now to you, give it as freely as it was given, and I will never trouble you again."

"You cannot doubt my will to do it,"

said Dalton, still in deep perplexity "but the truth is——"

"That is the whole extent of my present claim upon you. It is not my own demand."

"I acknowledge there cannot be a more just one, and my gratitude alone would make it a paramount one. But in plain truth, Tracy——"

"My daughter will be ruined," said I, "if it is not paid at once. It will be known that I have plundered her, and I shall be hooted from the country."

"I feel all the urgency of the occasion," said Dalton—"believe me, I feel its necessity. But indeed, Tracy—"

I would not suffer him to give utterance to the negative I saw ready to pass from his lips. "Again, Dalton, hear me." I said.—"You have a child. I heard you, but a few minutes since, describe my feelings for my

orphan girl, in painting your own towards your son. Suppose yourself in my situation, imagine that you behold your boy ready to fall a prey to poverty, to disappointment, to want and hunger (for that must be the event). Answer me as you would have your debtor answer in those circumstances, and answer quickly, for the night passes, and I have far to travel yet."

Dalton appeared somewhat touched. "If it were the last shilling in my possession," he exclaimed with warmth, and (I now think) with truth—"I would not withold it from you for an instant. But once more, my good Tracy——"

"Villian," I cried, losing patience at his hesitation and hypocrisy, "is it your intention to do me justice? I hate your fawning terms, they disgust, they insult me, I ask a plain question, and I demand a plain answer. Is it your intention to discharge my debt?"

"It is, assuredly."

"Enough. Let me depart then quickly on my journey. I have seen evil enough beneath this roof to-night to make me fear and fly it. Let me hasten with the tidings of happiness to my forlorn child."

"It is my determination to pay you;" Dalton resumed, "but to-night it is impossible. Many days shall not pass before your claim is settled, but I have not a sixth of the sum at present in my possession."

"And you will not pay me, now?"

"I cannot."

"Look hither, Dalton. I arose from a sick bed to find you out and tender you this proffer of forgiveness on these conditions. I have ridden in your track these two days, almost without food or sleep, and the Almighty who watches over the interests of my innocent child has made my search successful, not for my sake, but her's. If you

suppose my credulity still continues unenlightened, and that I can be prevailed on to trust a self convicted liar for another day, you are grievously in error. Neither you nor I shall leave these walls until this demand is settled."

"What shall I say to convince you?—I cannot pay you the money now. I have it not."

"It is impossible. Make me not desperate, I warn you. I am determined to be paid. If you could only see the horrid thoughts that have been thrusting themselves upon my imagination since we have been alone together—with how much exertion I have been wrestling against the hideous temptations that are momently rising up against my reason, and wasting its strength by repeated contests, you would be glad to make this compromise. Compel me not to recal the memory of your treason—I feel it rushing upon me at this instant with an almost irresistible violence. Be wise, and let this interview terminate quickly."

"I know not how I shall satisfy you. I will give you a note—a bond."

"I am aware of the value of your credit. I will take nothing but the hard gold I gave you—or notes which will leave nothing dependent on your own honesty. Pay me, ruffian, or I will tear the black heart out of you! If you have any mercy, pay me! Consider my agony—think of my distress—remember what you found, and what you left, me—pursue not your prey too far—you have persecuted me enough for your own purposes—be satisfied with what you have done—and have some pity."

"I have—I do pity you from my soul but—"

"Pity me!" I exclaimed, bursting into incontrollable rage and delivering myself up altogether to the triumphant passion—"Do you dare to flout me with the word?" I griped his throat and pressed him to the earth.

"Will you murder me?" he exclaimed, "I tell you I will satisfy you to-morrow."

"It is too late now—the devil has entered into me, and I am not my own master."

"You will not murder me?"

"I think I will," I pressed my knee hard upon his breast—"I should do the world a service."

"Help!—murder!—mercy! Take off your hands—"

His face blackened and his voice grew thick—a bad spirit put strength into my fingers — and they fastened in his flesh almost without an effort. I heard a tramping of many hurried feet upon the staircase—and there was a sudden cessation of the sounds of merry-making below. My victim grew silent in my clutch. At the same moment my own frame became exhausted by the violence of its own exertion—two or three painful throbs struck through my brain—sudden clouds gathered on my sight, and my limbs became unnerved.—A loud crash from behind sounded in my ears, and I became conscious of a crowd of persons sur-

rounding, and forcing us asunder. I made the effort of a dreaming man to keep my prey within my grasp, but my senses failed me in the exertion.

CHAPTER XVII.

When I had perfectly recovered my recollection (for I was indistinctly sensible of many occur rences that passed in the night), I found myself seated between cushions on the same tattered, leather-bottomed chair which Dalton had occupied. A bandage was fastened round my arm wher a vein had been opened, and a checque curtain wa drawn across the window, through which the grey light of a rainy morning diffused a feeble influ-

ence through the apartment. I listened for a few moments to the wind outside, which drove the heavy showers in fitful and uncertain gusts against the small window-panes. My head-ache was gone, and a slight ringing and confusion of ideas was all that remained. The sight of Dalton gasping in the agony of suffocation, as it was the last object on which my sight had closed, so it was the first vision that presented itself to my imagination on awaking. I groped with my expanded fingers and gazed around, as if expecting to find him still before me.

" Where is he ?" I asked, " he has not paid me."

" Whisht! who, sir ?" I heard a voice exclaim at my side. " Misther Dalton. Ah, if he did'nt pay you, take it from me, you paid him, an' that well."

" Is the bad man dead ?" I asked faintly, and in great fear.

" Dead, says he ? Oyeh. I'll be your bail

for it, he has a better grip o' the life than that. I wisht all the honest men in Munsther were as *clever* as he rode off from this last night."

"I am thankful," I said, after a long pause, "to the divine Being for this mercy, though I merited it not. He is gone, and I am glad of it. I might have had a heavy crime to answer for. I am most thankful for this great mercy. Well, Dalton, you have prevailed! — farewell, for ever!"

"Take it from me, you gave him a rale choking for all," resumed Mc Gawyl. "'Twas myself untied the handkitcher from his neck, and there was the print o' the five fingers as plain as the brand upon a cask. I declare I'll tell you no lie, I did'nt begridge him the little squeeze he got. His windpipe won't be the better of it between this and Michaelmas. My hand to you, he'll spake a little hoarse afther it. He has some notion of what the gallows is now, any way. May be the idaä he got of throttling, him-

self, will make him think a little before he'll bring so many good boys to the same fate without any rason."

"Mc Gawyl," said I, after some moments consideration, "I have a favour to ask of you. You used to think me a proud man for my scrupulosity in avoiding obligations, but you see how circumstances alter our dispositions. Pride is a fine tall tower, but misfortune is a miner that knows how to bring it low enough."

"Oyeh wisha, then, sir, what's the use o' talken' o' that? Arnt you the same as ever? what talk it is!—Look now—I never *warmed to you* rightly until to-night, after you choking Dalton. I wished I had a palace to put you into the minute I see you a-top of him. I consider myself bound to do any thing in raison that I can do to please you, after it."

"Can you lend me a horse? my own, that is, my friend Mr. Clancy's, is knocked up, and I wish to have her sent home."

"Is it laving this you'd be? An the doctor after bleeding you, an' desiring to keep you quiet, an' not to stir out o' the place until he'd see you again?"

"I feel myself quite strong, and even if it were otherwise, I have business to do which requires my presence immediately."

"Oh, what 'mediately, sir, what presence? I wonder to hear you talk so foolish, Mr. Tracy. An' besides," here he lowered his voice to a whisper, and cast a hasty glance to the door, "an' a stranger besides wanting to spake to you."

"What stranger?"

"O, that's more than I'll tell you this time, unless he'd be made known to you by his signs an' tokens. He's a tall *likely* looking man, only as yollow as goold, an' as chilly as a lady in an ague. The world would'nt keep the heat in him. Its what I tould him myself, when he had some coffee, for tay, last night

in the little parlour, below, and calling for more turf, till I thought he'd never stop, haipen, haipen it on till the place was like an oven, an' the blaze flyen up the chimney like a flood, an' he sitten in the chair with *oceans** o' great coats about him drinking his tay; its what I tould him, if he wanted to drive the cowld out of his heart, 'tis'nt that thrash he ought to be swallowing but some o' the stuff I have abroad, that would be a better jacket to him than all the tailors in Europe could make, if they wor paid for it. But he would'nt hear to me. Signs on, 'tis'nt I that 'll be losing to it."

"A tall, yellow man?"

"A tall, yollow man. He has money about him as plenty as pratie skins, an' keeps a loose hould of it very often. He is the same gentleman, although you might'nt have heerd it, that has bought up the lase of Cushlane Beg, an' is going to live in it, they say."

*A great abundance.

I felt a strong curiosity to learn something of the history or motives of this perplexing personage; although I was pre-disposed to form a judgment on both, from the conjecture of Dalton's able-bodied spy. I bade Mc Gawyl inform the gentleman that I should be glad to see him at his leisure.

In a few minutes I heard a slow and measured step accompanying the tramp of Mc Gawyl's brogue across the small landing place. The door opened, and the "tall, yollow man," made his appearance.

The subdued light which filled the apartment scarcely permitted me to scan with sufficient accuracy his face and person, although I experienced the same feeling of unaccountable embarrassment with which he had before now inspiredme. Immediately on meeting his first glance, I could yet discover that my surmise of a family likeness to Purtill was entirely an error. On the contrary, if I were disposed to trace any

particular resemblance, the person and manner which would most readily have occurred to my memory were those of Dalton.

The tall yellow man was, in the first place, as fame pronounced him to be, tall, and yellow. His eyes were sunken and yellow as his face; his jaw hung downward, and his lids dropped heavily over the discoloured balls from the influence of the general languor which pervaded his constitution. His dress was such as I had seen it at night in the Abbey.

He bowed and smiled faintly as he entered, drew one glove from his hand, produced a letter, and looked piteously, and with a chilly shuddering at the open door, which I bade Mc Gawyl close after him.

"I have not sought this interview," he said, in a languid, querulous tone, as he dragged his trailing limbs toward a chair which Mc Gawyl had placed for him, as if, to use the language of that quaint person 'the life *had been thrown*

after him.' "I have not sought this interview without some introduction. This is a letter from your daughter, Miss Tracy, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at—at—" he elevated his finger and remained gazing on the floor as if endeavouring to recal the name to his recollection—"at Cushlane Beg, I believe. I had the pleasure of knowing some of her family at one time, and I called to see her and you last week. She was hospitable enough to insist on my taking this letter, and an attendant, to find you. So that our acquaintance began quite in an Irish way."

Here, as if exhausted by the exertion of moving his lips during so long a time, he sunk back in his chair and remained in a lethargic attitude while I glanced over the letter. I could not avoid feeling an emotion of deep pity, when I contemplated the shattered frame of this unhappy being, whom, in all likelihood, the ambitious inquietude of a sanguine and fiery youth

had sent abroad in quest of distinction which he was doomed to attain, but never to enjoy. It is astonishing how feelingly we can moralize on the fortunes of others, while we can never contemplate our own with the same distant and philosophic eye. It is probable the tall, yellow man drew the same religious conclusions as to the vanity of all earthly projects of self-advancement, from my condition, as I did from his.

The letter contained no name for the gentleman, and conveyed a slight hint that it was a convenience which certain reasons rendered him unwilling to allow to his acquaintances. I read no farther, but resumed the necessary attentions to my visitor.

"You have found Ireland much changed since your departure, I dare say?" I said, in the careless tone of one who feels it necessary in complaisance to lead to a conversation.

But he seemed not to hear me. An air of absence not unmingled with melancholy over-

spread his features, and I found it necessary to repeat my question, in order to awake his attention. He started suddenly from his meditative position, and apologized for his inattention.

" I do find it much changed," he said with a shudder " in climate particularly. It is a great deal colder than I remember it in my youth. Your May now is like what your January was in my time. I am aware" he added, reddening slightly at the smile which I was scarcely able to suppress, " that much of this fancied change may be attributed to the altered habits of my own constitution, and that the same brisk air and fresh wind, that makes the blood run more warmly and merrily through the veins of two and twenty, may exercise a very different influence upon the frame of the valetudinarian, who has numbered those years once again beneath the fervour of an enervating West Indian sun. But I think there *is* a change independent of that."

" Or else our philosophers of the Royal

Academy are greatly in error," said I, "for I believe that is a popular point of inquiry at present. But I meant changes of another nature."

He shook his head and smiled. "That has become an exceptionable topic of conversation amongst you," he said, "but if you will have my opinion, I find little to surprize me. I might have left the surface of the waters at rest, but I knew that the elements of commotion were within and around them. I found the country labouring under the same nightmare which has been oppressing her energies and obstructing the circulation of her resources, with more or less severity during the last ten centuries. Her convulsions perhaps were less hideous and violent at the time of my departure, but her condition was not more prosperous. But I can find little use, and less pleasure, in speaking or thinking on this subject. There are other changes which touch me far more nearly, the alterations which the

lapse of years, my own enlarged experience, and my long estrangement have made in the scenes of my childhood. I left them, as I imagined, a faëry region of rural beauty and luxuriance. I return to them, after my senses have become naturalized to the fertile and voluptuous scenery of the West, and find, to my astonishment, a dreary wilderness of grey crag and sullen bog, the skeleton of my ancient home, recognizable indeed in every individual trait, but dismantled of all that richness and summer splendour in which my young experience and my absent memory had dressed her, a land apparently as poor, wild, shelterless, and neglected in her natural as in her political condition;—but should ask pardon for that questionable analogy. I would not talk so freely but that I was one of those who found you last night in the act of choking a Magistrate."

"Ah, the black knave!" I exclaimed, "it was my own wrongs, and no general principle

that moved me to that fierce act. He merited a worse fate, although I had no right to inflict it."

The tall yellow man raised his sable collar over his ears. "I heard enough of your story," said he, "to hold you somewhat excuseable for an unpremeditated act of passion. At all events, you are the best judge of your own culpability, so we will pass to a more agreeable subject. Your daughter, Ellen, (that is her name?) is a very beautiful creature."

"Relatives that have long lived together," said I, "are not capable of observing in one another those peculiarities of person and manner which appear most striking in the eyes of a stranger. I am told Ellen is handsome, I know that she is amiable."

"She is a very excellent young creature, in every respect. There is a mixture of frank gaiety and mildness in her manner and conversation, which I think is the most winning

circumstance of demeanour that a girl could possess. Her gently inclined head (which a rigid mother or governess, stern advocates of the bolt-upright, of whale bones and monitors, might condemn as a fault in carriage), and which imparts an appealing look to all her movements, reminded me forcibly of an old friend of my youth, who gave me and the world the 'counterfeit, the slip,' in my absence from Ireland."

Here a silence of some minutes ensued, which was suddenly broken by his asking me whether I had heard that he had purchased the lease of the farm near Cushlane-Beg?

I replied in the affirmative.

"I believe," he said, "there is a foible very usual with us wealthy old bachelors, who have wasted, in attaining the means of enjoyment, the time which happier and wiser mortals bestow on enjoyment itself, and who, when they *have* achieved the means, are deserted by

the power and the inclination to use them. The foible I mean is an affectation of despotic whim and eccentricity in their mode of dispensing that happiness which they are no longer capable of indulging in their own persons. I confess to you I have a large portion of this caprice in my disposition. I have laid down, in my own mind, a certain scheme for the employment of my future life, and I should feel little gratitude to any of the actors in my projected drama, who might mar it in the performance, by rejecting or disputing the parts I have allotted them. The plot flashed on my mind, yesterday," he said, with a smile, "and all its details sprung up and grew rapidly out of each other with all that consecutive force and aptness, all that vivid and harmonious brilliancy of contrast and arrangement, which, it is said, render the moment of conception one of such exquisite felicity to a fine dramatic genius. Although my plot has not the merit

of original invention, seeing that the characters are ready furnished to my hand, yet I am as fond of it as any poet could be, and as firmly resolved to bring it to a catastrophe."

"By the trouble you are taking to lay your prepossessions before me," I said, smiling, "I should suppose that I am one of the persons interested."

"Not as a principal," he replied, bluntly, "you are only indirectly connected with my plan. It is, briefly, this. I have no immediate connections in my own family, and few acquaintances that I wish to revive. I feel a strong desire, therefore, to create for myself a small domestic circle, with whom I may dwell as a close friend during the remainder of my life. For this purpose I have formed the intention, under your good leave, of bringing about an intimacy between the family of a young friend (to whom I intend to bequeath a great portion of my property), and your own, if you have no objection."

I was highly honoured.

"That young friend," he proceeded, is one in whom I have almost a paternal interest. Now, I am about to say something to you which will, in your eyes, fully establish my claim to that eccentricity which I admitted, but I hope you will meet it with indulgence."

I bowed and smiled.

"My young friend has seen and known your daughter Ellen. He admires her, he loves her. I know your history perfectly well, and I am sure there could not be a more happy union formed than that on which I have already fixed my mind, between my young friend and your daughter Ellen."

"This is rather sudden," said I, in great astonishment, "though very flattering. Pray who is the young gentleman?"

"That," he replied, "must yet remain a secret."

I was greatly offended, at the abruptness of

this proposition, and yet why should I? He is a very rich man, thought I.

"My daughter, I think," said I, with some hesitation, "would like to see her husband before the ceremony."

"Nay," he replied, smiling, "so she shall, and more, I promise, if she should not like her lover, she may discard him without ceremony."

I paused a moment, endeavouring to make a plausible conjecture. Aye, Dalton's spy is right, I thought, I believe he means Purtill. 'Tis Purtill's brother.

"He is a neighbour of yours," said the stranger, observing me hesitate.

'Tis Purtill, I believe, thought I.

"— As ardent an admirer of the young lady, as she could wish her accepted lover to be."

Oh, it is Purtill, I conclnded.

"Although I have not heard that he ever

ventured to ascertain his interest in her esteem."

"He did," said I, "but ——"

"What, you know him then?"

"No, no," said I, "it was merely a—conjecture."

It was true Paul Purtill had openly and frequently, even after his rejection, professed his admiration of Ellen (as I have before mentioned) but his poverty and his dissipated character rendered him a very inadequate competitor to young Clancy. Even now, that his prospects appeared to brighten up with a sudden and fortunate change, I shuddered at the idea of placing my poor girl's happiness at the mercy of such a profligate, although she could be freed from her present engagement.

"I anticipate," said I, "some considerable obstacles to your arrangement."

"And what are these?"

"Are you quite certain, your ward will be

so willing to accept the part which you have allotted him ? "

" I promise myself sufficient influence with him to know that he will present no obstacle."

" I have good reason to be well assured of his consent. I fear there is a difficulty which cannot so easily be conquered. My daughter is already betrothed."

Betrothed ? "

" Betrothed. The young gentleman's father and myself have hitherto kept the contract a profound secret, lest any accident, any inability on either side to fulfil the requisite conditions, or any change of inclination on the part of the young people, should prevent the agreement from being fulfilled. But the contract is made and witnessed."

" That ought, with your leave, to have constituted your *first* objection to my scheme, and not an idle speculation upon the dispositions of my ward. That," the stranger continued, draw-

ing his gloves higher on his hand with an offended air, "that at once sets the project at rest. I am sorry for it, for the plan had taken a deeper hold of my imagination than I should be willing to let you discover. But, it is, of course, at an end. Yet I will never forgive you, if you have not found Ellen a husband who is worthy of her," he added, in a gentler and sadder tone.

The spirit, covetous of wealth and influence, which had reduced me from competence to poverty, had not yet deserted me. It seemed to me an unwise course to neglect any means of cultivating the friendship and intimacy of so arbitrary and so affluent a person as the tall yellow man appeared to be. And yet there appeared now no possible means of retaining them amongst us, unless I proved false to my engagement with the Clancys, a base line of conduct, the rejection of which admitted of no hesitation. But, on second consideration, was not my en-

gagement, in point of fact, already virtually broken by our inability to fulfil its conditions? How knew I how the Clancys would act, when they had learned that Ellen was dowerless, and what would my daughter or her lover have gained by the exposure of my shameful appropriation of her little fortune, now become quite irreparable? It was true, Clancy, the generous old man, had professed his willingness to wave all considerations of self-interest, at our interview a few days previous, but I could not subject my child—(thus do the selfish ever impute to themselves the most purely disinterested motives), I could not subject my child to the mortification of being received as an incumbrance, where I would have her bestowed as a blessing. Therefore I thought there might not be much difficulty or objection in breaking off the match, so far as the Clancys were interested. But a greater bar remained in the way. No violence must be offered to the affections of my daugh-

ter. Yet here again a doubt arose. What violence was needed? Were those affections in reality so deeply implicated in the alliance? Was it a match of love, or a match of obedience? I have before said, that this love, if it existed, was not suffered to appear, and how knew I that it did exist? I had suspected, but I might have been mistaken. And even if she did, even if her affections were pledged—I paused awhile upon this article.

If they be, why she must marry him, was my first conclusion. That was very hard, for if she should, what was to become of me and Ulick, and Willy? And what addition, nevertheless, could it be to our evil, to know that a dear friend had escaped it? Aye, truly, but I was the father of her brothers as well as of Ellen, and what authority had I to sacrifice them to her? Truly, indeed, I would do no such thing. Had not Ellen an obligation, under the present heavy afflictions which bur-

thened our house, to bear her share of sorrow? Could she be selfish enough to hesitate in snatching us from ruin, at the cost of some restraint upon her own inclinations? If she could be so, she merited not to have those inclinations so tenderly consulted. I was no tyrannical father, affluent myself, and compelling my dependent child to yield me up her predilections, that I might make them subservient to some scheme of needless aggrandisement. I should merely require her to take poverty out of one house, and to refrain from carrying it into another. It was a very reasonable course, and one that I saw no cause to reject.

The advantages which would result from her compliance then rushed in upon my still doubtful will, and completed the conviction to which I had laboured to invite my reason. My fears, my anxieties were calmed in a moment. The hideous phantoms of want and misery which had been staring out upon me whenever I ven-

tured to look forward, and let my eyes rest upon the vast and dreary blankness of the future, now vanished from my sight—and in their place came " white-handed Hope," with all her gallery of pictured promises—the restoration of my lost content, together with the fulfilment of my more brilliant and ambitious desires. And should all this be flung aside, merely to indulge a partiality which perhaps had no existence, or a fancied one? I felt it right that she should comply.

To confirm me in this judgment, my imagination next recurred to the difficulties, the disgraces, and intolerable embarrassments which now hung suspended above my head. My pride could not contemplate, without agony, the prospect of unpitied misery—perhaps of ready scorn and derision, which lay before me. I resolved that Ellen should place no obstacle in the way of the tall yellow man's arrangement.

Nevertheless, said I in my own mind, if she persist in declaring her objection—(but that is

impossible)—I will not use violence. If her love be so deep as to render her separation from young Clancy a circumstance of real agony—(but that cannot be the case)—I will not force her duty. But the alternative can never be laid before me.

This chain of reflections passed through my mind with much more rapidity than I have used in detailing them. When a resolution once became formed in my mind, my whole soul—all the passions and bad feelings of my nature were enlisted in its prosecution. If I were not a tyrant or a ruffian in the common occurrences of my life, I soon became one when I had a shadow of justice to uphold me in any cherished project The circumstances, which had brought me to the gates of ruin, had called out all the violence of my nature, but not taught me the secret governing and restraining it.

While I was engaged in battling my way to the conclusion above-mentioned, the stranger,

who seemed in no wise displeased when left to his own reflections, or his own apathy, remained in his attitude of lethargy or exhaustion, his head drooping, his hands hanging over the arms of the chair, and his dull and sunken eyes fixed on the floor. I felt it a second time necessary to awaken his attention, by repeating, in a louder voice, a sentence which passed unheard when spoken for the first time.

"Thinking more deeply on your proposal, generous as it is," I said, "I have reason to say that the obstacle, of which I spoke, may not be found so obstinate as I at first imagined."

"Why?—Is she not contracted to another?"

"She was, but the contract was a conditional one—and the conditions have been broken on our side."

"So that the contract is, in fact, again invalid?"

"In point of fact, yes."

"Here comes the wind round to the old

point again. The sum total of your deliberation therefore is—that my plan is still practicable."

"I see no objection to it."

"And you will ensure the consent of your daughter?"

"I think—I am sure, I can—I will ensure it."

"It is very well. I ask you not by what means you propose to obtain it—what difficulties you may have to encounter—or how you design to surmount them—I shall leave the question of your daughter's consent entirely in your own hands, and proceed to carry the other parts of my arrangement into effect."

"You may rely with security on our compliance," I repeated, anxious that he should retain no doubt of his success. "The contract was, in a great measure, one of convenience, and since the convenience has fallen to the ground, I see not what should uphold the agreement that was founded upon it."

Lifting my eyes, as if by way of appealing to him for the truth of what I said, the sudden alteration that had taken place in the stranger's look and manner startled and confused me. He seemed, for the instant, to have lost all that languid inertness of look and attitude which was habitual to him. His head was elevated with an air of proud indignation; his eye, fully opened and filled with fire, was bent fixedly upon my face; and his lips, on which I thought I could discern a certain doubtful and flickering expression of contempt throughout the whole interview, was now curled, and set, in the unequivocal expression of that offensive sentiment. I felt, at the same instant, a hurried and agitating recollection, like the dim and transitory glimpses which the memory retains of a troubled dream, pass swiftly through my mind, and vanish, before I could distinctly define a single image of the suddenly awakened picture. It is impossible to convey an accurate impression of the sensation

which I underwent. A number of familiar faces, all expressive of trouble or apprehension, and figures in various attitudes of anxious expectance and dismay, were, by some strange association, presented to my mind at the instant I met the stranger's glance, and withdrawn as suddenly and as completely, as if they had never been. I had not the power to recal or retain any figure of the phantasma a moment longer on my sight. In the same manner, oftentimes, on recurring accidentally to that position of the frame in which I had slept during the preceding night—the story of a forgotten dream has swept across my memory, like the shadows of a careering sky over a sheltered lake.

The change in the demeanour of my visitor was as momentary as the impression which it produced. He quickly relapsed into his usual indolence of manner, and said, in the faint and hesitating tone which was peculiar to him,

"We will meet then, soon, again. I intend

at present, to proceed to the house of my young friend, and after I have rejoiced him with the tidings of his good fortune, we will lose no time in returning to Cushlane-Beg, and rendering ourselves agreeable to one another. I suppose I shall find you with your daughter?"

"There is little doubt of it, for I intend travelling to-day, and the distance is not more than a few miles. You must be sensible," I continued, after a pause, "of a very exquisite pleasure in the possession of the power which your fortune gives you—and which enables you to exercise something like a magic influence on the condition of others."

He tossed his head slightly, and replied to my observation, rather as if in communion with his own reason than with the intention of honouring me by any confidence.

"I am not generous enough," he said sadly, "to be content with this secondary species of enjoyment, though it is all that is now left me.

As I entered this inn, last night, I saw a stout fellow, without shoes or stockings, seated at a table in the landlord's kitchen, with a mountain of laughing, mealy potatoes, and a wooden piggin of thick milk before him. His cheeks were flushed with health and exercise, his eyes, (they were gay, happy, light blue eyes as ever I looked on) wandered with such an enviable satisfaction over the plenteous fare, and his whole face was lighted up with such a keen sense of enjoyment, that, if I were to look no further than this world, (I *have* hitherto seldom looked further,) I would have gladly changed persons with the boor. Aye, and minds also, for if knowledge be only valuable for the increase of happiness it brings, he had no loss in his inferiority. But," he added, with a sudden change of manner, "this long interview in your present condition must be of little service to you, and I am myself somewhat weary. I will take my leave for the present."

One of those awkward mistakes in ceremonial, which are so mortifying when committed, and which stick so long and so sharply in the memory, here occurred to me. As the stranger rose, he reached his hand towards me; I thought it was with the intention of taking mine, and offered it in consequence. But he declined the courtesy.

"I beg pardon," he said, very coolly, and without any embarrassment, "it was only my cane I wanted, which is near your chair."

I handed it to him, in great confusion; which was not abated by my observing a contemptuous smile upon his lip, as if he were surprized at my expecting such a familiarity. Before I had recovered my self-possession sufficiently to make any observation, he had gathered his furs close about his ears, sunk his head low between his shoulders, applied a silk handkerchief to his mouth, and made all the necessary preparations for beating across a

broken pane in Mc Gawyl's lobby, which admitted a thorough draught of air that rendered the enterprise one of a sufficiently hazardous nature.

Never was an individual left in a state of greater perplexity, confusion, pleasure, mortification, attachment and dislike, than that into which this professed eccentric had contrived to throw me. His pride filled me with indignation, and I felt my heart rise up and call for the rejection of his acquaintance; his generosity attracted me, and I forgave him; his good-nature pleased me, his indifference mortified me, the singular and unaccountable influence which he exercised on my memory confused me and I contemplated him with a degree of awe; his eccentricity perplexed me, and I threw up the subject in despair of arriving at any conclusion.

I now referred for information with more of leisure to the letter of my daughter. After

a gentle reproach for my absence, it ran in the following words :

"A tall, and somewhat sun-burnt gentleman, very apprehensive of cold, and very languid and absent in his manner, called here to see you last night, and remained to tea with us. I was polite to him, not only because he was an acquaintance of Rowan's, and because I thought he might be a person of consequence, and likely to be of service to you in your present necessity, but because, even from the first moment of his appearance, the gentleman attracted my liveliest interest. They call him an eccentric, and I think correctly, for he took no sugar nor cream in his tea, and wore his travelling cap the whole evening. He is the politest old gentleman you ever saw. I am ashamed to tell you what a strange and unaccountable feeling the very first sight of him excited within my mind, for I suppose you would call it ridiculous nonsense. But though

that might be fancy, *this* at all events is a fact, that on the second day of our acquaintance, for he stopt the night, I felt towards him the same confidence, affection, and reverence which I should have felt towards an aged and well known relative. If Rowan does not look about him, I cannot answer for what I may be tempted to do with myself. Don't you know he is a very rich old gentleman, and though he is now past the bloom of youth, I think there is something exceedingly, and, to me, mystically, interesting in his features? He was particularly anxious to be made acquainted with the fortunes of our family, but finding me reserved on that subject, as I did not like to say anything without your permission, he desisted with a ready delicacy, for which I admired him. If he should not become a constant friend, I shall surely break my heart.

"And now, my dear father, for our own sad

story. Do not remain long from us, do not leave me longer alone, while you go to struggle with misfortune at a distance; do not any longer put me away from you, as if I had no interest in your afflictions. It is not treating me well, my dear father, although I am sure you mean it kindly. My heart is heavier than I have told you. My dear brothers! Let us remain together, my father, and all will yet be well. They will become irreclaimable truants in your absence, for my authority is nothing. Let me echo the invitation of the tuneful Amiens:—

Who doth Ambition shun,
And loves to lie i'th' sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleased with what he gets.
Come hither, come hither, come hither,
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

ELLEN TRACY."

"Who doth Ambition shun!

I repeated to myself as I folded the letter, and

placed it in my capacious pocket book. "She is a fond little knave, but sufficiently self-assured, when she bestows such a satirical inuendo as that upon her father. 'Twas a little hard, but let it go. I deserve it. I am rejoiced however to see that my purpose with respect to the stranger seems to be more than half achieved before I have made known a single wish. There is no ambition in this, at all events."

I was shallow enough to think so, and shallow enough to take for the serious feelings of her heart, the light and toying gaiety of her allusion to her old affection. There never were father and daughter who lived together so long in ignorance of themselves and of each other. She little dreamed that I could be a tyrant, and I never suspected beneath that light gaiety and submissive gentleness, which illumined all her character, the existence of such depth and strength of passion, such an

unhesitating firmness of determination, and such a piercing clearness of perception as I afterwards found it necessary to contend with.

While I was still engaged in considering the emergencies in which I was placed, a smart knocking at the door announced the return of my landlord.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SITTING down before the mirror, which Mc Gawyl had placed on the table, and looking on my own shadow (for the first time since that memorable day on which I had left Cushlane-Beg), I started back in a transport of sudden fear and astonishment. Not more lively was the amazement of the young prince in Hawkesworth's tale, who discovered upon his own shoulders the head and features of

his rival, than was mine at the alteration which had taken place in my own appearance. My hair, a cluster of jet black close fitting curls, of which I was once not a little proud, and from which even in my latter days it was my custom to pluck with a jealous anxiety the silver warners of approaching age, was now a grey and grizzled mass, well suited in expression to the fierce and violent lineaments which it overshadowed. Those lineaments likewise had undergone a frightful change. It was not their distortion, in the mutilated mirror before me, that shocked my self-love; while I saw my nose, and mouth, and eyes, with the other features wrenched out of their proper collocation by the numerous cracks in the glass, and resembling the dissected map of a child, awkwardly put together by some blundering geographer. But they were in themselves rendered sufficiently hideous by the neglect and agitation of the preceding days.

The cheeks and eyes were hollow, the forehead dry and yellow, deep lines were sunk around the mouth and between the brows, and the whole was so disguised in dust and mire, that it had not only a wild and ferocious, but a mean and vulgar air. I felt the blood mount up in my face when I recollected the unhandsome figure I must have made before the elegant stranger, and thought, in my own mind, that he was hardly to be blamed for declining to shake hands with me.

While Mc Gawyl busied himself in procuring breakfast, I dispatched a messenger to Dalton's house with the following note:—

"Your good fortune preserved you from the fate you merited at my hands last night—and Providence, for some secret design, permits you still to prolong a life that you have made many unhappy wretches like me desire to abridge. I am satisfied. The violence which I employed towards you was unpremeditated,

and I am rejoiced that it has not had a more serious termination. You have succeeded. I have served your purposes. You have robbed me with impunity, and I have little hope now of regaining the property with which I was weak enough to entrust you. There I suffer our connection to rest, for the present, and it is possible that it may never again be renewed. But I have a farther warning to give you.—Attempt not, as you value your safety, to carry into execution one of those diabolical schemes which I overheard you and your creatures project while I waited your leisure last night. Farther than this, there is nothing which I feel myself obliged to do with respect to information obtained as it was by a course unintentionally indirect. You are therefore still the guardian of your own bad secret, so long as you find it expedient to refrain from putting it into execution against the victims you had marked out.

I am, &c.

ABEL TRACY.

'I had concluded a breakfast on hot coffee and toast, with eggs "that were laid that morning," and made nearly all the necessary preparations for my departure, when my Mercury returned with Dalton's answer to my letter. It was cautiously worded, and evidently written in the anticipation of its meeting other eyes than those for which it was professedly intended. He affected an entire independence of the friendly or hostile disposition of a person so little governed by the accepted regulations of social intercourse as I was. I had thought proper to overhear private conversations, framed for specific purposes out of the emergency of the occasion, in which I could not discover how much was in accordance with the sincere opinions of the speaker, and how much was the result of a necessary policy. With respect to his own impressions of my conduct, I might consider myself indebted to the domestic affliction which at present absorbed all his attention, for the impu-

nity with which my violence was attended. My apology indeed (such was the term he applied to that passage of my note) ought to be considered sufficient, according to the opinions of "the world," on such contingencies, but even if it had not been so readily and speedily made, he doubted whether he should feel himself authorised in seeking redress at the hands of one who was capable of so frantic a mode of retribution as I had thought proper to adopt. Without explanation given or received (although he could have amply satisfied me, had I heard him detail the motives of his conduct), I had rushed upon a course of practical recrimination for which he was but little prepared, as he supposed it to be a long time out of use in civilized life. That he took no farther measures at present to convince me of the little wisdom my conduct manifested, I might thank his boy, Henry Dalton, and with regard to those insinuations in my note, ap-

parently intended to intimate that any part of his character was within my power, he should think it unnecessary to adopt any precaution whatever ; he should consider it scarcely worth protecting, if it were liable to injury from the malice of a baffled assassin.

For some moments after I had read the letter, I remained in doubt as to the course I was called on to pursue. My choler rose and swelled within my bosom at the daring insolence with which he received what I conceived a free and generous proposal. I knew enough of the man, however, to be convinced, that notwithstanding this fanfaronade of defiance, he would be careful to comply with all the stipulations contained in my letter, and as my principal object in writing (the safety of the people against whom his machinations were directed,) would be thus accomplished, I had little difficulty in resolving to suspend all personal altercation for the present, and until

my weighter interests, should be adjusted. At all events, I determined not to expose his character until I had established my own circumstances in better security than that in which they stood at present, for assuredly I had a duty to discharge to my dependent family. It was this trimming between the wrong and the right, this serving of heaven under the guidance of Satan, this worshipping of virtue and of mammon, this facility of taking evil for good, and patching over the suggestions of selfish passion and covetousness with stolen fragments of right reason, that constituted the leading error of my conduct, and continually involved me in ruin, disgrace, and sorrow. There are many in the world who thus frame to themselves a false conscience, and force themselves to believe that they are doing the will of the Almighty, when, as that great Being knows, they are doing nothing less.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was now so long since I had conversed with the fortunate Purtill, and his domestic economy had been at all times so entirely unknown to me, that I formed the design, contrary to my original intention, of dividing my journey, and spending the approaching night at the cottage of my adopted son-in-law. I had the less hesitation in resolving upon this project, as I soon became aware that my re-

covered strength was not sufficient to enable me to prosecute the whole journey without a stage of rest. My limbs were stiff and pained, and my joints snapped and creaked on the lightest motion, like hinges obstructed with rust.

Another purpose might be accomplished by a visit to the lucky mountaineer. I had heard and read much, and experienced more, of the changes in heart and mind, that are produced in men by a change in fortune, and (although it may appear to some that I slander myself in saying so), I secretly longed to prevent the news of his good fortune at Purtill's cottage, and ascertain the present state of his disposition towards my daughter. So far had I now, by the force of wholesome reasoning, conquered my fatherly repugnance to this alliance, that I felt not a little anxious lest it might be prevented by any want of inclination on the part of the young gentleman himself. A timely visit would afford me the double opportunity of learning

the condition of his mind, and of scattering in his ear such accidental words of encouragement as might arouse his long-surrendered hopes, and possibly entangle him in the difficulty of a proposal, which I would hold in deliberation until the announcement of his legacy had taken place.

But was I, indeed, capable of constructing and executing a scheme so full of meanness and base chicane as this? If I had been charged with such a design, at the moment in which it was formed, I would have disclaimed it with some violent and perhaps practical demonstrations of indignation. And if I had asked my own heart what its motives were in making this visit, it would have answered with all the simple honesty in the world, that it was conscious of nothing more than a desire to see an old acquaintance, and to become more intimately known to an individual with whom it was probable I should soon be closely connected.

But it would have lied, for all that, to itself and to me. The design above mentioned formed, almost unknown to myself, he motive on which I acted.

The ostler now brought to the door a horse which my landlord had borrowed from the village apothecary, and I rode off. Mc Gawyl continued to watch me from the door in conjunction with several of the idle villagers, who were seated outside, on the sill-stones of their low windows, enjoying the warm sunshine of a summer noon, with their straw hats drawn low, so as to shade their eyes, (the only active parts of their frame at that lazy moment). I gallopped rapidly away, and soon withdrew myself from their observation.

Considerable delay was occasioned while I lingered in the neighbourhood of the village, by certain professional habits in the apothecary's mare, which, however amusing they appear on recollection, were sufficiently annoying at the

time they occurred, and prevented my arrival at the house of Purtill before the sun was in the west. All the doctor's patients who lived on the road-side, were to be visited before the stubborn animal would listen to any proposition of leaving the neighbourhood. Accustomed as she was "from a filly up," as my landlord expressed it, to convey her master on a certain course of visitations, and convinced that I could not know better than he did what way she ought to travel, or perhaps supposing that I had similar reasons for enquiring after the health of her old acquaintances, she trotted up to the cabin doors one after another, nor could any remonstrances of whip or spur prevail on her to move a step forward until I had held some communion with the inmates. I discovered, moreover, another practice, sufficiently indicatory of her master's profession, which entertained me more, as it annoyed me less, than those before mentioned. Her usual movement was a jog-trot, or a heavy

lazy walk, more tiresome to the unhappy individual whose destiny placed him astride upon her ribs, than the greatest rapidity of progress which she could exercise. I observed, however, that when a carriage, or handsome car, or even a horseman, of a more genteel appearance than the country people who passed us, appeared on the road, she suddenly altered her pace, raised her head erect, affected a certain smartness of movement, trotting sprucely forward, or even gallopping, as if I were in a prodigious hurry somewhere or another, on a concern of life and death. When the equipages however passed out of sight, and while we met no vehicle nor person of greater importance than a countryman, or common car, on its way to market, no efforts of mine could induce her to continue the same expedition.

I was jogging along, when an able-bodied, hard-featured man, jumped suddenly down upon the road, and laid hold of the bridle of

my mare. A glance was sufficient to enable me to recognize my former enemy, Shanahan.

"For what you did last night," he said, "and not for saving me from thransportation and my childhren from ruin, I tell you now I am your friend. You have made my enemy your enemy, and I am free with you for ever. So you had your fingers, last night, I'm tould, Misther Thracy, upon Dalton's throath, had'nt you?"

"I certainly collared him," said I, a little startled by the suddenness of the query.

"And how come you, sir, to let him slip through your fingers so soft?"

I acknowledged the truth, that weakness alone obliged me to relinquish the perpetration of a frantic and horrible revenge.

"Wakeness!" he exclaimed aloud, with a mixture of contempt and indignation in his tone and look—"Poh! where was all the beef an' mutton you ever ait?"

I stared upon him in silence.

"Look at that!" he continued, throwing the bridle into his left hand, and extending towards me the right, with all its hard and bony fingers displayed abroad. "There's a hand that was reared upou nothing but the praties, an' see! if it once got the same grip o' Dalton's wind-pipe that you had, I'll be bound it is'nt wakeness that would make it let go o' the howld, any way."

"But I think it was a very fortunate weakness for me, Morty," I said, "that saved me from so foul a deed. You would not have me murder the man?"

He looked troubled. "Oyeh wisha, Misther Thracy," he replied in some uneasiness, "the heavens bless you an' let me alone."

"Whatever my own injury might have been," I continued, "you would not have me take the right of vengeance into my own hands? Would you?"

" Let me alone, Misther Thracy, an' the heavens bless you."

" I should be sorry, Morty," I said, after a pause of some moments, " to think that you would be capable of justifying a proceeding of that kind."

" An 'm sure, I would'nt, sir. The Lord be good to me, I would'nt either."

" Then what did you mean by taxing me with my failure ?" I asked.

He raised his hands and waved them slightly with a deprecating gesture. " Look now, Misther Thracy," said he, " don't talk to me at all, that's what you won't."

An' almost uncontrollable spirit of curiosity urged me to disrespect his entreaty. He had excited my interest in too extraordinary a degree, to hope that I should desist so readily from its gratification.

" I only spoke," said I, " because I was cu-

rious to learn whether you knew any thing worse of Dalton than I have already learned ?"

"A deal—I did, a deal. There now, let it stop there, sir, an' the heavens bless you ; for I'm not myself at all, rightly, when I hear that man mentioned, or when I think of him in my own mind. The Lord direct him this day : but he done me great harm, surely ! My brains in me head you'd think would be fairly afire, sometimes, when I do be thinken' of him. I strive to do what's right, an' to be said by them that knows better than me, what I ought to do ; but the Lord forgi' me, I'm afeerd I'll do something that's not right some time or other."

"We are fellow-sufferers then, Mihil," said I, "for I have much to say against him also ; but yet I forgive him from my heart."

"Oyeh, what signify is what injury he ever done you ?" exclaimed the mountaineer. "He made a poor man o' you, may be. A' what's that ? Did he come to you in the biginnin' o' your youth

and put himself between you an' all you ever owned? Did he ever———but what's the use o' talken?"

Passion, although it affects a certain degree of secrecy, is never displeased to meet with the opportunity of a confidence. I conjectured, now, by Shanahan's manner, that he was quite as willing to impart, as I was to ascertain, the occasion of his struggling resentment. After walking smartly forward by the horse's side during a few minutes, he suddenly exclaimed:

"I won't be darkening my soul with it any longer for one story, but tell it off at once, an' so have done with it. I'll tell you how it was, Misther Thracy, now—and let you say yourself have I any raison again' Dalton or no.—Listen, hether.

"You know the colleries over—where they raise the culm? 'Tis a good piece now since I lived with my brother hard by that place, an' a sisther o' mine that you heard me spakin' of the night you were over at the house when Phaudhrig

was brought in dead to us. You heard me charge him with deluding that girl away from us, although I wasn't rightly sure of it at the time—but I have raison since to think I spoke the fact, for Maney, his man, mentioned to a neighbour that he had money from Dalton for her; an' I'm sure Dalton would never send her money if it was'nt for raisons. I'm going now to learn more about it; an', indeed, the day I find it so, will be the sorest day to Dalton that he ever knew.

"It would be madness for you, Shanahan," said I, "to attempt any thing against his life. He is too securely guarded, and it would be a lunatic as well as a wicked effort."

"I never will lay an angry finger on Dalton himself," replied the man, "but I have a way to be revenged."

"What's that?"

"A way that will set him mad—that will turn his brains for ever without hurtin' a hair of his head."

"What is it, Shanahan?"

"You 'll know when the day comes. He keeps the poor sisther in plenty o' money. I wisht I could make her out."

He closed his lips hard, and walked on in silence, leaving me in great perplexity as to what this terrific mode of vengeance might be, at which he darkly hinted. Although he treated me with a scrupulous civility, yet there was an occasional wandering and absence of mind observable in his manner, which showed that something of greater importance that any subject of conversation before us pressed upon his mind.

"Great throubles in England lately, I hear, sir," he said, aloud, after observing a long silence, and in a tone quite altered.

"Yes," I replied, "the poor manufacturers were in great distress. They were wretchedly destitute of employment and of course, of food."

"See that.—I hear they ait very little piatez at all in England?"

" No more than a man eats here of greens with his bacon."

" O murther! murther! Only bread entirely, sir?"

" Bread is their chief article of diet."

" See that!—Why, then, I declare, sir, now, although they talk so much o' that white bread, I doubt whether itself or the piatez is better, after all. I was passen' through Derrygortnacloghy the other day before buckisht, an' not being able to wait for the cups boiling, I bought a loaf of it, an' I declare to you I thought it no more under a man's tooth than a bit o' sponge. It has'nt the substance o' the piatez at all with it."

" A great deal depends on custom," said I.

" True for you. Custom is to one man what nature is to another. An' them English—would they get a bit o' meat often in the week, now, with that bread?"

" They seldom go without it."

"The Fridays or Sathurdays itself?"

"Fridays, or any day."

A deep groan followed this announcement—the mingled result of amazement at the habitual profusion of good living, and horror at the little self-denial which was used in its consumption. Turning towards me soon after, with a ghastly smile and an intensity of look, which contrasted strangely with the simplicity displayed in the preceding conversation, he said:—

"An' if that's the way they live, its little wonder that a scarcity, this way, should set 'em going. They don't know what poverty mains at all. Let 'em come over here, and spend a season in Ireland afther a poor harvest, an' we'll larn 'em how to die in a ditch or along the road-side, quiet enough, an' make little noise about it."

We rode on now for several minutes in unbroken silence, the mountaineer appearing wrapt in his habitual mood of abstraction, and little

disposed to endure any interruption on my part. In a short time after, however, the bitter or mournful association, whatever it might have been, passed away from his mind, and suddenly raising his head, he resumed his enquiries into the political condition of the neighbour-island.

" Is'nt it a wonder, sir, the parli'ment would'nt do any thing for them people that time?"

" They did something," said I, " but it is not possible for them to find the means of relief in an instant. The king, however, gave some portion of his own property to assist the poor people, while the distress existed."

" See that—Why then I often think with myself that the king has nature in him, an' would do something for us, if he could, but I b'lieve he's bothered from the whole of 'em about him, an does'nt know how to manage."

Here he mused for a few moments. " The House o' Commons? Shasthone! That has'nt

any call to the House o' Lords now, sir, I believe ? "

" They are two separate houses altogether."

" See that again. An' them commons now—they daren't go into the Lords be any means ?"

" They dare not show their noses there, beyond the railing that's about the foot of the throne. If they did, there would be pretty work."

" There would be great work, surely, I b'lieve. An' them commons, now, in the coorse o' time, will any o' them come to be Lords.? "

" Those who are sons of peers will, on the death of their fathers."

" I understand, well. An' I b'lieve its a deal easier for them to go there than for those that it is'nt kind* for 'm to be Lords ? "

* " It is kind for a man" to have any particular disposition, means that the same disposition has been observed in his progenitors. The term only applies to character, and is used in this instance with reference to a transmission of hereditary rights, " by authority ;" that is to say, the poetical license of an Irish mountaineer.

I continued to make familiar to him the peculiar constitution of the British aristocracy, while he interrupted me occasionally, as I unfolded the various harmonies of the system, with ejaculations of "See that," or "Murther! murther!" Before we had exhausted the subject however, I could perceive that the interest which he manifested in the subject was very superficial, and that there still remained something underneath of a deeper import, which he longed, yet hesitated, to bring under discussion. By degrees, the conversation was again broken off, and the poor mountaineer relapsed into his disappointed and abstracted air.

We had now lost sight of the village, and of the majestic Shannon, which winded slowly at some distance below, now embosomed among blue and purple hills; now thridding its gentle course through the intricacies of wooded creeks, turretted headlands, and green islands; and further onward, dilating its giant bulk, and

placing a long and weary distance between the sunny shores and glimmering white-washed cottages on either side. As we proceeded, in a slow, but continual ascent, the country began to alter its appearance. The fertile and richly cultivated undulations of the soil, its sun-dried meadow fields and dark green acres of potatoe-land, chequered with a gay variety of blossoms peculiar to the vegetable at this season, gradually disappeared behind us, and a country of a singular wildness and sterility arose upon our sight. The hills, no longer swelling gently out of the champagne, like the unbroken billows of a breathless ocean, now rose in sudden and abrupt masses around our track, presenting in their chequered costume of grey limestone crag and scanty verdure, an appearance somewhat analogous to that of the ragged peasant, who toiled on his narrow strip of tillage along their sides. The vales, no longer enriched by the efforts of rural industry and cultivation, no longer beau-

tified by the handsome villa, the stately improvement, the cheerful bounded lawn, the trim plantation, and the happy cottage, now presented to the eye nothing of a higher interest than a tract of uncut bog, or a sullen lough, half concealed by rushes and weedy shallows, on the banks of which a wretched cabin, with mud walls propped, and roof falling in, sent up its thin and tremulous smoke into the sultry air above it, while the poor solitary, who housed his wretchedness in this lonely tenement, suspended his labour before the door-way, and leaned forward on his spade, to speculate on the appearance and destination of the travellers. At a long interval, a farm house of a more comfortable appearance than was usual, might be discovered in a well chosen corner among the crags, and at a longer yet, the apparition of a handsome cottage, with its elegant pleasure ground and neatly tended shrubbery, started up before the astonished eye of the wayfarer, and furnished a

pleasing evidence of a truth (on which, though long impressed upon my mind, I had seldom acted), that the magic of real life is industry.

Feeling a desire to ascertain something more of my companion's real character than he seemed willing to disclose, and curious, moreover, to know how far he participated in the natural indolence which is so generally, and in point of fact so falsely, attributed to the peasantry of his country, I directed his attention to one of the snug farm houses above described.

"There is a proof," said I, "of what a little care and industry can accomplish. The man who built that house, and reared the young timber about it, had little time to waste in fighting at fairs, or drinking in public houses."

"An' that's what built the house an' planted the timber for him, you're thinking sir," the mountaineer replied, taking up the inference I intended he should deduce with that rapidity

of perception for which, amid all their simplicity, the people of his class and nation are most remarkable :—" True for you, so it was, indeed. Drinking is a bad business for a poor man, or a rich one either, and fighting is a deal worse. You never spoke a truer word than that. But I'll tell you what helped to make the place as nait as it is, besides. The man that owns that house is a *Palentin** an' a Protestant, he has his ground for five shillings an acre, on a long lase; he has a kind landlord over him, that will never *distress* him for a small arrear, he isn't like a poor Catholic that has a mud cabin, an acre o' pratie ground, an' seven landlords above him,† an' that has no feeling nor kindness to look for, when times run hard, an' poverty strikes him between the cowld walls. An' with submission to you, sir, that's the very thing that causes

* Palatines, descendants of German settlers.

† This is no fiction.

all the drinking an' the fighting. When a poor man sells his corn at market, an' feels his pocket full o' money, I'll tell you what he does, an' what he says to himself, an' he returning home of a cowld night, sitting upon the corner of his *thruckle* [cart], with the moon shining down upon him, and the frosty wind blowing into his heart, an' the light streaming out o' the windee o' the public house on before him. 'I have thirty shillings or a pound now,' he says to himself, 'an' that's enough to pay my rent for this turn. Very well,' he says, 'an' when I have that paid, what good 'll it be to me?' I don't know my landlord, nor my landlord doesn't know me. I have no more howld o' my little cabin an' my bit o' ground, than I have o' that smoke that's goen' out o' my pipe. I don't know the moment when I an' my little craithurs 'll be wheeled out upon the high-road, an' the more pains I lay out upon my

ground, the sooner, may be, 'twill be taken from me. An' I'll go home now in the frost, and pay this money to the masther, giving him a wattle to break my own head! Wisha, then, indeed I won't. Let the masther, an' the rent, an' the cabin go, an' whistle together if they like, *I'll* go an' warm my sowl in my body, with a glass o' spirits, an' have one happy hour at any rate, if I never have another! In he goes, an' I need 'nt tell you the state his pockets are in when he comes out again. That's the way the drinking comes, Mr. Thracy, an' the fighting comes o' the drinking just as nathural as a child is born of his father."

"I can't but acknowledge," said I, "that there is some justice in what you say. But you do not mean to tell me that the man makes his condition any better, by such reasoning as that?"

"Heaven forbid I should main any such

thing! No, Misther Thracy, I only state what's nathural, when temptation falls in a poor boy's way. I'm far from saying that he does right in falling into it, but I'm thinkin', sir, that I would 'nt like to be in the state o' that man that puts it before him."

"Yet, after all, Shanahan," I said, a little entertained by this display of national dignity in the decayed descendant of a once honourable name, "after all, you must allow that if there were more industry there would be some little increase of comfort among the people. You can't deny, you know, that there is a great deal of idleness among them."

"I'd be sorry to deny any thing your honour is pleased to charge again' us, I'm sure; but where is it you see it, sir, if I might make so bould?"

"Why, there, for instance," said I, pointing with my whip to one of the poor cottages that were scattered at various distances along

the road side. "Do you see the way that roof is patched up with whole sheaves of reed, when a few days' work would enable the owner to thatch it far more comfortably, more neatly, and more durably, with half the quantity of material? Do you see that broken gateway propped up with a few stones, when half an hour's work would put good hinges on the piers? And look at that gap, in which he has thrust a car instead of a gate; how long would it occupy his time to nail a few rough sticks together that would enable him to leave the car to its proper uses? Look at the little field on the left, where the cow is grazing, disfigured with loose stones; and look at his own little truckle-road, almost rendered impassible with rocks and ruts which a few hours' trouble would remove!"

"I see—I see it all, an' its aisy for you, sir. A few days' work, an' a few hours' work,

an' a day's and an hour's, an' a few hours to that again, would set the place to rights, may be, sure enough. An' that's one o' the idle boys that your honour thinks are too plenty in the country. I'll tell you, for I know him well, what sort of an idle boy that is that owns the house. He gets up every morning of his life at day break, an' takes a spade on his shoulder to go up an' work out his rent, upon his landlord's ground, an' when he has that done, he has to dig out his own little spot, an' after that again, he works about among the neighbours from sunrise to sunset, for eight pence a day, so that between saison and saison, there is'nt a day that he has to himself, excepting may be a month or two in the year that he can enjoy himself, at aise within upon his bed, on the broad of his back, in a taking faver. He might stay at home, surely, to-day an' to-morrow, or for a week to come, if he liked, and do all that wants to be done about the

place; but if he did, himself an' his craithurs should go without milk to their praties for that time, a thing they could'nt well afford, in times so full of sickness and sorrow as these. While the poor man would be *tatchin'* his house, his childer would be crying inside of it; while he'd be gathering the stones, he'd be scatthering their bread; an' while he'd be driving the nails in his gate, hunger would be driving a nail in his own coffin!"

"Well," said I, "I wo'nt dispute the question of an indolent disposition with you, but don't you think, now, that there is loss of time, one way, if there is not another? Do you think it would do that man any harm if the priest allowed him to do a little work on a holiday, instead of spending it in idle gossiping about the place, or perhaps in a worse way?

"By your lave, sir, I'll tell you what I think o' that also. Them people that spend the hollidays in idleness or worse, as your

honour says, would do betther, surely, if they spent 'em at the spade, an' so the priest would tell 'em, too. 'Tis'nt the fault of a good thing that a bad use is made of it, an' the people that drink and fight on a holliday would do the same of another day if they had'nt 'em. But I'll tell you what I'm thinking, sir. We are so aiger for gain, (the Lord forgive us!) that if there was'nt a little check put upon us, now an' then, we'd break our heart for lucre. An' what signify is what's of 'em for hollidays? twelve in the whole year! I do'nt know, nor ought I know as much of other counthries as you, sir, but I'm thinken' you'll name few where a man works so hard and gains so little by it, as here in Ireland."

I would have been ashamed, (poor human vanity!) to let him know at the time what an alteration his plain and homely eloquence had effected in my own long established, but lightly founded, opinions.

"Well, Shanahan," said I, "you speak rationally. It would be well if all your neighbours had as proper notions of duty as you seem to have."

It appeared as if I had struck a jarring chord within the breast of the mountaineer, for his features instantly lost their open and sensible expression, his eye winced with an air of consciousness, and his face grew deadly pale and yellow. He contented himself, however, with merely replying, as he tossed his head, with an appearance of indifference:

"Oyeh, sir, I'm long enough in the world now to know the wrong from the right."

"And to act accordingly," said I.

He made no answer.

Once more the conversation was suspended, and my companion resumed that mournful look which I had already observed. Our roads now separated, and I took that leading up to Purtill's house, at a loss to conjecture

under what new light I should have to contemplate the character of a man who had first broke upon my acquaintance as a ruffian, then softened into a simpleton in knowledge, then soared into a philosopher, and, finally, by the moody disposition indicated in his look and demeanour, left me in doubt whether I ought not to look upon him as one

So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,
That he would set his life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on't.

CHAPTER XX.

Late in the evening, I turned my horse in upon the broken and neglected avenue leading to Purtill's dwelling. The residences of country bachelors in general, though often trim and neat have an air of unconquerable loneliness, which is inseparable from the condition of their owners; an appearance of something forlorn and unfitted. But Purtill was an Irish bachelor, the relic of a peculiar and now almost forgotten race, and

his dwelling was quite in character with his person and habits, distinguished by a mixture of idle neglect and ingenious contrivance, and with a profusion of succedanea of all descriptions. Carts for gates, boards for window panes, cords for hasps, and other specimens of Irish lieutenancy, were here to be seen on every side. There was no knocker to the door, a small rope served for a handle, the bobbin of the latch had been pulled in, but on examination I found that this was no inconvenience, for it was without a latch, and yielded to my hand. A spade, with the iron stuck in a crevice of the flagged hall, and the head against the door, served for a dumb porter. There was not even a dog to bark at me when I came in. I went to the parlour door and tried the brazen handle, but it came off for want of a rivet, and remained useless in my hand. I knocked, but no one answered. With a little further examination, however, I ascertained that the groove of

the lock had been, destroyed, and entered the parlour on the same "open Sesame!" system which had been successful at the hall door.

A table was laid in the middle of the room, of good mahogany, but covered with stains from drinking. Under another, close to the wall, were placed a quantity of empty jars and bottles, the rifled monuments of noisy hours gone by. Some broken glasses and tumblers were placed on the wooden mantel piece, as ornamental trophies. A small bell lay near, with a little button hung to a piece of whipcord instead of a tongue. A cracked fiddle hung against the wall, and a flute, corded in a dozen places with cobler's wax-end, lay on the table. The character of the place, altogether, was like that of an infirmary for all kinds of maimed and superannuated articles of furniture.

I had thoughts, while I looked around upon this scene of indolence and dissipation, of steal-

ing quietly out of the house, remounting my horse, and riding quietly home to my poor child, without degrading her with the proposition of such an alliance. But while I walked across toward the parlour door, I was startled by the report of a gun shot in another room. It was followed by the loud roar of a man's voice, and an exclamation uttered in one that was familiar to my ear, of—"Ah, ha! What say you now? How am I now, do you think?"

Snatching up a poker, I hurried out into the room from which the sounds proceeded. It was the sleeping chamber of Purtill. On the floor lay a man upon his back, bellowing hideously, and kicking his feet into the air. It was the young fellow to whom I had committed the charge of the poor girl in Limerick. Through the cloud of smoke, which was slowly dispersing above him, I saw the figure of Purtill, sitting erect in his bed, with a brass-barrelled blunderbuss in his hand, his night-cap pushed back

upon his crown, and a triumphant smile upon his countenance.

"Ah, ha! you scoundrel!" he exclaimed in a taunting voice. "How am I now? Do you hope I'm better now?"

The man answered by a redoubled roar of pain and terror.

"What are you doing, Purtill," said I, "are you going to charge again?"

Hearing these words, the man suddenly stopt howling, and looking up with a terrified face, scrambled off the ground, and rushed out of the house, after threatening all the vengeance that law and violence could enable him to inflict upon his foe.

"What's the matter, Purtill?" said I, "have you really shot the man?"

"No," replied he laughing, and settling his night-cap, "it was only a good fright, though he is yet in doubt himself, whether he is not meat for worms."

"What did he do to you?"

"I'll tell you, if you'll lay that blunderbuss upon the rack for me. But in the first place, how are you? I am glad to see you."

We shook hands, and I placed the weapon on the rack, as he desired.

"That fellow," said he, still laughing, and gathering the clothes about his shoulders, "has the reputation of being a very great wag, in our village, and has often boasted of playing pranks on me, but I think I am pretty even with him. Our acquaintance began in a manner that ought to have given him a lesson, but fools will never learn."

"How was that?" I asked.

"Why," said Purtill, "I was in the market house, getting some corn weighed, when this fellow happened to come in. Seeing me very intent on what was going forward, he told the owner of the corn, that he saw me touch the scale. I overheard him, and I told the rascal,

what was true for me, that he lied in his teeth, so he struck me on the head. I turned round, I had no stick, but I snatched up a butcher's cleaver that was lying by the wall, and I made for the rascal. He *cut*, and I cut after him; he darted into his house and shut out the door in my face; I sunk the cleaver into the pannel, and split it from top to bottom behind his back."

"That was rapid work," said I.

"Would'nt you think that it ought to have been a warning to the fellow?"

"'Pon my word, there certainly was something ominous about it."

"Well, and so it was. He did'nt venture to sneeze in my hearing for six months. But after my duel with young Dalton, who had the misfortune to shoot me through the leg, and within the last month, when I received a touch in the left shoulder in another affair of the kind with Lorenzo Doody, this fellow began to run a quiz upon me, while I could not help myself. He

used to come to that room door every day and begin whining out, 'Well, how are you to-day, Misther Purtill? Do you find yourself anything betther, sir. That Mr. Doody, sir, is a terrible man, sir. He's as bad to you as Misther Dalton, sir. Will you go fight *jewils* any more sir?'—and various witty taunts of that description, drawled out with a tone of great simplicity, and affected concern. Well, sir, what did I do? Stop, and I'll tell you. I got old Batt, abroad, to hand me that blunderbuss off the rack. I put in a good charge of powder, and laid it quietly here at the head of my bed, determined to give my lad a proper salute when he should come next to ask after my health. Well, sir, this evening, about half an hour ago, he comes as usual to the door, but with a different manner, for the rogue knew I was getting well, and he was afraid of a practical retaliation. So he asked me quite seriously, how I was getting on? I answered him just in the same tone, and begged him to walk in,

as I had something to say to him. He did so, sir, and when I had him in the middle of the room, out I whipped my piece from under the quilt, and banged the contents into his face. You saw the rest yourself. So much for visiting the sick."

"Well, Purtill," said I, laughing, "it would be well if all your jokes were as harmless; but you will get a broken head at the next fair."

"Oh, that as a matter of course," said Purtill, "I take my chance for that. I should enjoy little peace if I were to be calculating on the cousequences of every freak of this kind.— But to what am I indebted for this visit?"

"It will take me some time," said I, "to inform you."

"Oh then, if it will, go to the parlour, and amuse yourself with something while I get out of bed to follow you—"

"But—"

" Nay,—I was just going to rise. I only staid in bed to waylay that fellow."

I re-entered the parlour, where I found old Batt with a basket of turf between his knees, making down a fire.

" Well, Batt," said I, " so your master fought another duel lately?"

The man tossed his head and smiled. " He did, sir," said he, " an' a dhroller jewel never was fought before or after."

" How was that, Batt?"

" Why then I'll tell you, sir. The masther an' misther Doody over, that had a difference about a horse o' the masther's that he knocked again' misther Doody's chesnut mare, an' faix if they had, they sthruck one another on the rights of it. Well, it was late at night, afther they dinin' together over at the priests' house, an' so after they going they agreed to fight one another in the middle o' the village, an' they havin' no seconds, nor nobody with 'em

but meself. Indeed only Misther Doody was drunk, I don't say he'd do it, for he was always very exact about discipline, an' to say the truth, fonder of the discipline then he was o' the fightin (with a knowing wink). But the masther threatened to post him if he would'nt do it that minute. So they borried a pair o' blunder-pushes, and loaded 'em with slugs, an' they agreed to walk up to one another from one end o' the street to the other, an' to fire when they plazed. Well, when Doody walked away to his post, an' the night so pitch dark, that you could'nt see a stem apast your hand, 'I'll tell you what it is now, masther,' says I, makin' up to him an' whispering in his ear, 'walk away home with yourself now an' lave him there, an' you'll have a joke again Doody for ever.' He made me no answer, only ga' me a kick that tumbled me in the gutther. I had no time to say more, only made a one side, an' hid behind the pump,

for fear Doody would begin to fire unknownst. Well, it is'nt long till I hear the masther crying out, 'Where are you, Doody, you scoundhrel. Are you skulkin' any where in a corner? Let me know, till I blow your brains out.' 'Here, you rascal,' cries 'Doody, out frontin' you in the middle o' the street.' So they blazed at one another. 'Did you get it that time,' you scoundhrel?' cries the masther. 'No, you rascal, did you?' cries Doody. 'I did'nt, you pig,' says the masther, 'let us load again.' So they stept a one side and loaded. 'Stand out again, you tinker,' cries the master, 'until I riddle you.' 'I'm here already, you ruffian,' says Doody. So they blazed again. 'Well,' cries Doody, 'did you get it now?' The masther said nothing, so I crept out afeard, an' went over an' found him sittin' upon the ground, an' the gun lying anear him. 'Are you hurt masther?' says I. 'Batt, says he, with a groan, 'I believe we're a pair o' fools.' 'Have

you much pain, sir?' says I. 'It went through the shouldher,' says he, 'an' lodged inside, I fear. Where's Doody?' 'He run off,' says I, 'when he seen you down.' 'He was right,' says the masther. 'Well,' says he, an' I puttin' him up on the horse, 'whatever comes of it Batt, its a comfort to know that we done the business like gentlemen.'"

By this time Purtill entered the room, and old Batt, laying his finger privately along his nose, winked at me, to signify that I should say nothing of what he had been telling.

"Do you see how that fellow leaves the door open?" said Purtill, after Batt left the room, "the fellow has been living with me these fifteen years, and I never once saw him shut a door without being desired."

"Call him back," said I.

"Not yet," replied Purtill, "I always wait until he is seated snug by the kitchen fire,

with his pipe in his mouth, and then I summon him back."

He rung the maimed bell, and Batt re-appeared.

"What's wantin,' sir?" he asked.

"Shut the door," said his master.

"Oyeh, wisha, Lord help us!" said Batt, going out and doing as he was bid.

"It is your own fault, Purtill," said I, "to have your servants in such bad order. If they had a mistress to train them, they would not be so negligent."

"Ah, Thracy," exclaimed Purtill, in a most pathetic tone, "it is not you that ought to make me that reproach."

Dinner, or rather a collation bearing some resemblance to it, was now served in, and Purtill entertained me during the repast with accounts of his adventures in the neighbourhood; how he cheated the doctor in a bargain of a horse; how he *wigged* the parson out of half

his tythes; how he, *humbugged* the proud old barrister by taking off his hat, and bowing to the ground whenever he came in sight; how he threshed a bailiff; kicked a process server; and performed other feats of a similar description.

Without at all letting him into the secret of his good fortune, or hinting anything of my private views, I now took an opportunity of inviting my host to Cushlane-Beg for a few days. Perceiving that his countenance brightened at the proposal, I fixed the time for the following morning, and then rolled on into some talk of my domestic affairs, and let him know enough to imagine that the alliance with the Clancys was at an end. Seeing that he became still more joyously intetested, I took an opportunity, in the course of some further conversation, to venture a plain intimation that his visit might not at this time prove so unacceptable to Ellen as it did when she was younger and more foolish.

"By ———," said Purtill, swearing, "I'll get drunk for that word, before I leave this chair. Batt!"

Batt appeared.

"Bring me a kettle of hot water and tumblers, and turn out Mr. Tracy's horse into the short field. Do you hear? the *short* field."

"I know, sir," said Batt, with a look of sharp intelligence.

"And, Batt!"

"Well, masther?"

"Shut the door after you."

"Oyeh, choke it for a doore!" said Batt, "my heart is broke from it. It won't stay shut, sir."

"Why, where's the plug?"

"It was cut up into *kippens*, sir, to *skiver* the chickens."

"Well, draw a chair against it, then, and go along."

Batt took his departure, laying hold of the back of a chair, and drawing it after him with the door, until he just left room for his hand to escape; while he muttered, during the whole manœuvre, "Wisha, the dickens carry you for one doore, dear knows we're kilt from you. I'd as lieve be mindin' a young child."

Purtill made good his promise of becoming intoxicated that night, and the natural consequence was, that the sun was high in the heavens before we got on horseback the next morning.

"The masther thrated you well, sir," said Batt, in a whisper, while he led my horse to the door, "in turnin' your mare out last night into the *short* field as he calls it."

"How is that, Batt?"

"'Tis the best grass he has, sir, that he gives only to those he likes. The long field he has for sthrangers, such as tax-gatherers, and

ministhers, an' people that there's nothing to be got by."

"And where *is* the long field, Batt?" said I, after looking vainly round for one that might answer the description.

He approached the saddle, laid hold of the stirrup leather, looked cautiously over each shoulder, and then putting his open hand to the side of his mouth, he whispered:—

"Faix, then, the high road, sir, and sorrow one else. Long enough, I'll be your bail. One would think the horse himself could'nt name it betther if he was axed, poor crathur!"

CHAPTER XXI.

PURTILL did not set out like the "frog who would a wooing go," in his opera hat. On the contrary, his dress was exceedingly shabby. A rusty black coat, buttoned up to his chin, a pair of greasy doe-skin *tights*, cobbled top boots, and a hat that looked as if it had been singed over a fire, constituted the external man.

"It will look better," said he, turning up

his elbows on perceiving that I perused his attire askance, "when I get it turned, and new buttons sewed in."

It was not, however, until I was once more seated in my home, until I had taken my gentle daughter in my arms, and kissed her, and looked upon her fair and affectionate countenance, and her slight figure, attired in a mourning dress, and thought of her departed mother, and looked once more at Purtill shrinking into a corner in his conscious inferiority of pretension, that I felt the entire baseness of the resolution I had formed.

Yet what was I to do? The first step had been already taken, and Purtill was here already standing on a virtual proffer of my paternal interest on his behalf. Was I again to be guilty of a retraction? Was my life to be one continued series of deceptions? And then my promise to the wealthy stranger. I was already bound to take the course I had

in view, and I determined, for once in my life, to act with consistency and resolution.

I had taught my daughter, from her childhood, to treat me with perfect and entire sincerity, and the consequence of this mode of instruction was that she had no secrets from her parents either with respect to her feelings or her inclinations. My spell for securing her confidence was this. When she avowed to me any natural sentiment which the peculiar constitution of society renders unfit for general currency, I did not, like many foolish parents express a sudden horror and astonishment, and thus compel my child to keep her own counsel on another occasion. I always said, "My child, that is a very natural feeling on your part, and you are a good little girl for telling it, but if you indulge those feelings, my darling, it would lead to very bad consequences." And then I let her see just so much of those consequences as was necessary to convince her

reason, but never affected a horror at her freely expressing a sentiment that nature had implanted in her breast. On the contrary, I rather coaxed than terrified her into a hatred of vice, and taught her to consider concealment as the most shameful of all offences. I made candour sweet to her, by my endearments. For I thought, that if fortune should frown upon us, and Providence should think fit in its wisdom to leave my child alone upon the earth, without a guardian or instructor, the world, intrinsically indifferent as it is in matters of virtue, had yet an external decorum upon its surface that would prevent her doing anything egregiously wrong while she kept nothing secret from her friends. The alteration which had taken place in my own character during the last few months, was the first occasion of reserve which had ever arisen between my child and me. Even that had fully disappeared since she was left an orphan, and we were now on

those confiding terms which always had existed between us, and always ought to exist between a parent and his children, a sweet, and condescending love, without familiarity, on his part, a depending confidence and filial openness on theirs.

But that passionate thirst of influence and wealth which had first assailed my heart when I made the acquaintance of Dalton, had settled like a storm cloud over our free affections and steeped our hearts in gloom. That innocent, that confiding child had trusted all her happiness into my keeping, and I was now about to sacrifice it. It is with shame and agony I dwell upon this portion of my story; but I have determined to hang up my character as a warning example to those who may be tempted by the same dark passion, and that determination shall be unsparingly pursued.

Three days elapsed, however, before I could bring my mind to enter upon the task which I

had set for it. The day arrived which the tall stranger had appointed for his visit, and it was only then, when necessity compelled me to be resolute, that I finally resolved on putting my plan into execution.

Paul Purtill, who had by this time made himself quite at home, was inspecting some cocks of a peculiar breed in the yard. Rowan Clancy, attired in holiday trim, was standing at the window of the little drawing room, and expecting Ellen who was in her chamber preparing for a morning walk. I entered the parlour through which I knew she must pass on her return, and turning the key in the lock awaited her appearance.

I drew a small table and writing desk to the centre of the room, and judging that it would be easier to induce her to give her consent in writing than by word of mouth, I wrote a short letter addressed to Rowan Clancy, stating that in consequence of the unexpected calamities

which had fallen upon our house, and which made her father unable to fulfil the conditions of the agreement between both families, she was compelled to withdraw the promise which she had given, at a time when she thought she could bring something to him besides poverty and suffering. I left a blank for the name, and replacing the pen upon the desk, continued to walk back and forward, with my hands behind my back, and my breast filled with unusual struggles.

The desk was Ellen's, and, in looking for paper, on which I might write, I found a little poem in the handwriting of Henry Dalton, with an unfinished copy in her own. I transcribe it here, for I feel an interest in any relic of that unhappy youth, greater perhaps than another might in its intrinsic value:

With some unblest and lightless eye,
With light half droop'd, and moist, and meek,
Tells silent tales of misery,
The trembling lip could never speak.

What is it wets the listener's cheek,
What fills with love his answering voice,
And bids that suffering heart not break,
And bids that trembling eye rejoice?
When the heart wavers in its choice,
What is it prompts the generous part?
Oh, spring of all life's tender joys!
Oh, sun of youth! 'tis heart! 'tis heart!

II.

When the advancing march of Time,
With cheering breath had roll'd away
The mists that dull'd her morning prime,
And Beauty steps into her day;
What gives those eyes that conquering play
That aching bosoms long confess?
And lights those charms with quickening ray
That else had charmed and conquered less?
A sweet light unto loveliness,
A meaning breathing o'er the whole
That else might charm, but could not bless,
Win, but not fix? 'tis soul! 'tis soul!

III.

When youth and youthful friends are gone,
When disappointment glooms the brow,
And early loves leave us alone,
To walk in friendless sorrow now,
And chilled is young rapture's glow,
And hoary grown the raven hair,

And age its paly tinge of woe
Hangs over all youth fancied fair,
What guards our home from still despair?
And bids joy linger, both to part?
Oh, balm of grief and pining care!
Oh, stay of age! 'tis heart! 'tis heart!

IV.

When Beauty feels the touch of years,
When the round voice grows faint and small,
And that bright eye is dimmed by tears,
That once held many a heart in thrall,
What makes that voice still musical?
That sunken eye still seeming bright?
And beauty, even in beauty's fall,
As full of witching life and light,
As when the hue of young delight
Over its blushing spring time stole!
Oh, star of love's approaching night?
Oh, shield of faith! 'tis soul! 'tis soul

V.

Seldom they shine in worlds like this,
Seldom their favouring light we see,
For passion taints earth's purest bliss,
With spots of dark mortality;
But once a sweet dream came to me,
A vision of a glorious land,

Where sounds of gentle revelry
Rose on the soft air, making bland
And rapturous music to a band
Of nymphs that o'er the green path stole,
Where Beauty and Youth walked hand in hand,
Lock'd in love's faith with Heart and Soul.

My daughter entered the room, while I was reading, and had already turned the key in the opposite door before I was able to call her back. A feeling of reluctant shame made my nerves as sensitive as those of a recluse. When, however, she had passed out of the room, and closed the door after her, I rose quickly, opened it, and said in a low voice—

"Ellen, I want you."

She returned instantly.

"Come in, Ellen," said I, "and close the door. Lock it. I have a great deal to say to you, and I am afraid of being interrupted. Is it fast?"

"It is, sir," Ellen answered, looking a little puzzled.

"Come hither, then, at once, and sit down here. Lay aside your gloves."

"Why so, sir?"

"I want you to write something for me."

"Will you want me long, father?" said Ellen, in a simple unconscious tone, while she drew off the gloves as I desired, "because Rowan is waiting for me."

"For what?"

"To walk, sir."

"You must not walk with him, my love."

"Not walk with him!"

"No, you must not walk with Rowan any more."

"Father!"

"Well, Ellen?"

She laid her hand upon my shoulder, and looked up into my eyes. I avoided the glance as well as I could, (though I saw quite enough

to cut me to the heart). I removed her hand, pressed it, and summoned strength to go on.

"Ellen," said I, "listen to me. I am utterly ruined now."

"Oh, Father, not ruined!"

"Well, perhaps not ruined quite. Only disappointed in all my undertakings—in all—without a hope, (but one,) to redeem a part of what I have lost, to save my children and my dependents from utter penury, and my own old bones from growing cold within a dungeon cell. You may not think this ruin, but it wears a gloomy aspect."

"Dear father!"

"Do you understand me fully, Ellen? We are all undone. I am ducked to the ears in debt, and left no choice at all between famine, and a jaol. This house will cease to be ours before another day. I have not even——" I paused and leaned my head upon my hands.

' Not even what, father ? " said Ellen in a gentle, piercing tone of sweetness.

" Not even that sum of money left by your uncle for your use, and which was to have entitled you to Rowan's hand. I know," I added, perceiving the girlish indifference with which she heard a piece of intelligence that ought to have filled her with uneasiness ; and more annoyed at this apparent levity of mind, than I could have been grieved by her reproaches ; "I know how it is with the young and inexperienced, when ruin frowns at a distance, and her hollow eye is yet bent with a feeble influence on their condition. They will not heed her threats, nor detect her approach by the far and warning signs that older ears are tuned to startle at. They hear of her, when they are seated at their morning meals, how she has stalked athwart the affrighted island, and turned into liquid fire the blood of her children ; how she has stung the peaceful citizen, by invading his domestic love, and that way rendered

him a brawler and a wretch; they hear how the hungry-eyed and iron-fingered fiend has snatched the food from the lip of the famished labourer; how she has shook the mighty frame of the great state itself, till it rocked on its foundation and seemed about to sunder; these things they hear as if themselves were sacred from the ills they they shudder at—and till the gripe of the demon is fixed upon their throats, till the bread is wanted at their board, and every sense shouts famine in their ears, they look on these as distant perils, and flatter themselves that they are exempted from the common chances of human-kind!"

"Dear father," said Ellen, "why do you say this to me?"

"Does the picture fright you, then?" I continued—"'Tis ours, my girl—my children's and my own. Ellen, we are lost. Aye, look around, and lift your eyes—even so. It *is* the home which you have known from childhood,

and yet which you must know no more, unless you do what I am sure you will not."

"And what is that sir?"

"Will you do it for me?"

"Will you not trust me, father?" said Ellen, putting her hands around my neck.

"I will, my girl, my love, my treasure. It is but to write your name to this letter and send it down to Rowan."

I handed her the letter, and I saw her eyes swim and the blood leave her cheeks and lips while she read it. Her hands sunk upon the desk, and she remained for some moments as if a sudden struggle had oppressed her breath.

"Is it possible," she said at length, "that my father wishes me to sign such a paper as this?"

"Ellen, it is our only resource."

"And why sir? Why should this cold rejection come from me? If I am not now the bride that Rowan loved, why should I be the

first to divide the knot that has bound our hearts so long? a knot that you, my father, first tied; and which I have always thought so entirely delicious."

"Rowan, my love, is poor; and he could not in the present circumstances make you happy, nor be content himself."

"But, sir, we are both young. Why should we hasten then?—The world is fair before us, and a few years of exertion may find Rowan independent, and capable of realizing all our wishes, yet."

"And where may these few years find your father and your brothers, Ellen?"

She drooped her head suddenly.

"No, my child," I continued, seizing on the sympathy I had just awakened, "even if Rowan were willing and able at this instant to perform his portion of our agreement, you must surrender yours. I am sure, Ellen," I added, taking her

hand and looking in her face, "I am sure you do not love Rowan, after all."

"Indeed, indeed, I do, sir," she replied with great earnestness and simplicity, "I have told him so fifty times."

"Aye, but not quite as well as you could love your husband?"

"Quite—quite as well, indeed, sir," Ellen replied, looking up in my face with eyes sparkling and brow glowing with the clearest blushes.

"But I have a lover for you, Ellen, who will love you better, and be more worthy of your love. A Crœsus, Ellen, who will restore the golden age to our comfortless home, and make its walls re-echo once again with careless laughter. You shall visit no more afoot—you shall have a coach and horses, and—see— here's the pen—the place is left a blank for you—I tell you he is wealthier than a miser—he is full of riches. Rowan? Psha, Purtill, Ellen. Here's the place. Come, write."

"Purtill, sir—Mr. Purtill!"

"Paul Purtill is the man of whom I speak."

"A rich man, sir!"

"He is the master of a mine of wealth. He could buy sixty Clancys."

"I thought," said Ellen, "there was something in his visit at such a time. If you please, father, I will take Rowan's arm, and still continue to walk afoot. I'll have no coach with Purtill."

"You will not sign the letter?"

"I cannot, sir."

"Very well, Ellen," said I, folding the letter, "go down to Rowan then, and take your walk, and leave me alone if you please."

"My dear father—"

"Take away your hands, if you please. Go and amuse yourself. I have something else to occupy me now. Take away your hands."

"Oh, father—"

"Are you my enemy too, Ellen?—Are you too deserting me?"

"I am not indeed, sir," she answered, crying aloud.

"Will you write your name here?"

"Father!—"

"In one word, let me have your answer."

"Oh, spare me, sir!"

"I would save you, my daughter. Save yourself and obey me."

"Have you no other hope?"

"None, Ellen, none—not one, my child—my angel!" I drew her into my lap and caressed her cheek. "Look, Ellen, I am utterly destroyed. In my days of sunshine and of hope I was proud, puffed up, and scornful—and I must now become a mark for the gibes and jests of all those who feared me then, even while they hated me. You know not, my gentle, my humble, my timid child, you know not what the agonies can be of blasted ambition—of disappointed pride. You

know not how dark and how unpitied is the fall of him who, when he sought to rise, began by severing the social ties that bound him to his fellows, and clambered up the ambitious height alone. I am that lonely wretch, so crushed—so fallen—and yet if you desire it, safe from evil."

"Oh father," cried Ellen, suddenly flinging herself upon my neck, "my heart is in your hands!"

"I'll give it to one, my love, who will treasure it as if it were a faëry dower."

"I cannot, I never could love Purtill."

"Then take away your hands, and leave me. I do not want you to fondle me with your arms, while you stab me with your tongue. Begone! I continued, rising in anger from the chair, and putting her away, while my limbs trembled with a passion similar to that which I had felt during my interview with Dalton, "I can do without you. I have degraded myself, and I deserve to be repulsed. Again, I desire you touch me not."

"What can I do to serve you, father?"

"Nothing! I will have nothing from you, never again will I ask you to move a finger if it were to save my life. Go, go, and enjoy yourself. We can do without you well."

"Oh father, I never saw you looking thus till now. You never said an angry word to me, till Mr. Dalton first came near us."

"And by what claim," cried I, stamping in uncontrolled fury, "do you dare rebuke my looks or manner? I bid you leave me at once. If you have never found me passionate, never till now have I found you undutiful. But do your pleasure."

"Stay, my father!" cried Ellen, sinking suddenly upon her knee, and clasping my hand.

"For what?" I asked, looking round upon her.

She paused and lowered her head for a moment, and then looking up with a pale and altered face, she said:

"I will do all for you that a daughter should do."

"And what is that?" I asked

"I know not," she said, in great agitation, "I'll sign the letter, oh, no! no! Oh, Rowan!"

"My daughter! My dear daughter!"

"Do'nt ask me, father; I am in your power, I cannot refuse you if you ask me."

"My darling, and my deliverer!"

"May heaven forgive me, father! Where's the place?"

"Here, here, this blank, don't tremble, dry your eyes."

"I will, sir, Heaven forgive me. I'll do it for you, father. I'll sign it for you, sir! I'll write whatever you please. I cannot!" she almost screamed aloud as her eye fell upon the letter, "Let me rather die at once."

"Good girl!" I said, bending over her chair, and holding her hand, which still retained

the pen, and replacing it upon the desk. She averted her head, covered her eyes with her left hand, and with a little assistance from me, the important signature was affixed.

I now loaded her with caresses and expressions of gratitude, reminded her of the poverty and woe she had escaped, and the wealth, and splendour she had secured to herself and to her family. But she seemed to take no heed of what I said, and remained, during the whole time, pale and motionless with a kerchief pressed against her lips, and her eyes resting low down. When I had done, she merely said, in a faint tone:

"May I go now, sir, to my room?"

"I'll lead you there," said I, "you will be merrier, Ellen, by and by."

"I will, sir."

"You have my blessing, darling."

"I hope so, sir."

"Your mother's spirit blesses you."

"Oh, no! I have broke the word I gave her."

"Aye, Ellen," said I, "when virtue bade you; virtue, which was her idol."

With a low moan of piercing anguish, she withdrew herself from my embrace, and hurried up to her apartment. I felt my heart-strings torn, but I clenched my teeth hard, and resolved to suffer all and persevere.

CHAPTER XXII.

After I had sent the letter down to Rowan, I remained seated at the desk, and altering my spirit to prepare it to encounter that of the fiery and violent young man whom I was about to injure. I could not, however, divest myself of the nervous anxiety which remained upon my heart, until the first sound of his rushing feet, upon the stairs, awoke the combatant within it

He entered the room with the open letter in his hand; his person expanded, and his eye lighted up with extreme indignation.

"Where's Ellen, sir?" he asked.

"She is in her room, Rowan."

"I wish to see her; I wish to know if this," pointing to the signature, "be really her hand."

"You may learn that from me, Rowan. It is her hand. I have seen her write it."

"And then, of course, it has your sanction too?"

"It has."

He paused and stared on me for some moments in silent wonder.

"May I ask, sir, why is this? What have I done to deserve this sudden, this cruel change?"

"Nothing, Rowan. It is no fault of yours that we are unable to fulfil that agreement on which from the beginning this alliance was sup-

posed to rest. I thought our reasons were stated in the letter."

"They *are* stated there," said Rowan, with great indignation, "and with so cold and heartless an indifference, that I cannot think that Ellen even ever read the letter. Nothing *but* the signature I see is in her hand."

"The rest is mine," said I, "and I think I do you good service, Rowan, in preventing you from completing what would be an act of folly and of certain misery to all concerned in it."

I was met here by the same arguments at which Ellen did but glance. Rowan used them with fervency, with force, with eloquence, and with dexterity. He promised impossibilities—he remonstrated—he reasoned—he pleaded—he importuned. At length, finding it impossible to meet his instances in a satisfactory manner, I said:

"The truth is, Rowan, it is impossible for

me now to hear you. Convinced of the expediency of the measure which I have adopted, and feeling satisfied of your acquiescence, I have already formed other arrangements."

"I feared, I thought it!" exclaimed Rowan, with sudden vehemence. "I knew there was something more in this than zeal for my advantage."

"—— Which cannot now be retracted, without a grievous injury."

"And is there no injury to me?" said Rowan. "Have I sustained no wrong? Without notice given, without a word of explanation, without even so much form as the courtesy of society requires, I have been flung aside in a manner, sir, that—that is very wrong, sir, that is most injurious, that is—base, Mr. Tracy."

"Young man," I exclaimed, much incensed at the word, "if you wish to have this interview continued, you must use the language of a gentleman."

He walked up rapidly and bent his brow upon me, for a minute. "I have been so long accustomed," he said at length, "to regard you in the character of a father, that I cannot instantly forget my own. And if you were not mine, you are Ellen's, and that is sufficient for your safety. But I must and will be satisfied, and therefore, I demand from you, as an act of justice, the name of the person in whose favour those other arrangements have been formed."

"I cannot oblige you in this, for I do not know the name myself. But I have no wish to conceal from you all that I *do* know. The principal agent in the transaction is an elderly gentleman, whom I met by accident, who appears to have lived a long time in a tropical climate, and who has been observed wandering about this country during the last year."

A sudden astonishment appeared to seize

upon the listener. "Is it possible," said he, "that he can be the mover of this measure? I know him well. He is at this moment at my father's."

"The yellow stranger!"

"He whom I met here in your absence, within the last fortnight."

"The same."

"I am utterly astonished. I have an appointment with him on this very day. I met him accidentally about a year since, when he made many inquiries about your family. I met him since on many occasions, and have even had professions of friendship from him. He has even hinted that ——"

Here he paused, his face brightened, and he seemed to have caught at some idea which bewildered and yet pleased him.

"I will take my leave," he said, in a hurried manner. "I will say no more of this until we meet again. The time for my ap-

pointment will soon arrive, and that will throw some light upon my situation. To you, sir, I say nothing, I refrain from giving expression to my indignation, but if *he* have acted with duplicity, I will take measures to redress my injury, before you see his face again."

He hurried from the room and left me in a state of strange perplexity. How was I to reconcile these circumstances? The wealthy brother of Purtill a visitor of Clancy's and an acquaintance of his son! I felt myself unable to account for what I heard, and left the house to meditate upon it in the open air.

It was a still summer noon, and I strolled in the shadow of the hedge rows, as far as the ruin already mentioned more than once. There was something in the fevered noon-tide stillness, as I entered the abode of death, more impressive than even the lonely moonlight under which I had last beheld it. A few herons were settling on the ivied steeple

and making the deserted aisles re-echo, at long intervals, with their harsh screams. The rank grass lay brown and withering in the heat upon the nameless tombs. The castled elms flung their dark and motionless shadows short upon the groun'd, and gave shelter to some sheep and goats, whose natural appetites were not acute enough to force them out into the parching vertical sunshine.

There is no time at which the solemn repose of such a scene as this produces such a charm upon the spirits as when they are beginning to subside from the agitation of recent passion. I sat down on a broken capital, and suffered the events of the preceding year to glide, like wave after wave, through my memory, while I listened in perfect stillness to the twittering of the golden wren among tne branches of the yew, the cooing of the lonely wood-quest, the distant voice of the cottager, and the occasional

bursting of a small seed-pod on the wild shrubs that hung around me as I sat.

The sound of a woman's voice, uttering the Irish cry which is used at wakes and funerals, attracted my eyes in the direction of the church-yard gate. Two men were entering, bearing on a hand-barrow, which they carried on their shoulders, a coffin, painted a coarse brick colour, and having a cross of black stuff nailed down upon the lid. A woman, hooded and kerchiefed, a simple looking girl, and half a dozen country people, were following this poor funereal display. One of them bore under his arm a couple of spades and a shovel, for the purpose of committing the departed to the earth without requiring the expensive assistance of the sexton. They bore the coffin round the place before they laid it down near the spot where two of the men had already begun to dig the grave. I observed that the spot selected for that

purpose was close to the tomb of Shanahan, where I had endured his mother's curse, (a curse that since had fallen so heavily upon me.) Indeed there were several of the faces which I recognized as familiar to my eyes almost from my boyhood.

"Take care, Ned," said one man, who was standing near the head of the coffin, and spoke in a low voice of sullen grief, "don't let the spade touch Phaudhrig's coffin where you're digging."

"No fear, Morty," replied the delver; "there's a foot of earth between 'em yet."

"That will do," returned the first speaker.

"What's the raison," asked a third, "that she would'nt be taken to Kerry, to her own people, Morty?"

Morty did not appear to hear the question, but his wife, from whom the funeral wail had proceeded, answered for him.

"Oyeh, the distance is too far," said she, "and, moreover, she declared it as her delight to be buried here, o' 'count o' Phaudrig."

At this moment I felt somebody touch my arm, and started slightly. On looking over my shoulder, I saw the figure of the old soldier, so often mentioned, who was standing close to my side. His appearance at this moment was very different from what it had been at any former interview. His face was more haggard than usual, his lips blue and trembling, and his whole figure shaking with what appeared to be either the result of ill-health, or mental agitation.

"I ask your honour's forgiveness," he said, uncovering his grey and scanty hair, "but would you tell me who that man is that's standin' near the coffin, with his arms gathered over his chest, if you plase, sir?"

"His name is Shanahan, Morty Shanahan,"

said I, "put on your hat. Be covered, my good man."

"Shanahan!" he repeated, not seeming to have heard my last advice. "And, if you plase, sir, whose is the berrin'?"

"I have not heard," said I, "but I can perceive that it is his mother's."

"A Kerry woman was she, sir?" he asked in a somewhat tremulous tone.

"She was, and some people said, not the most flattering specimen of her native county."

By this time the grave had been completed, the woman renewed her wail, and I took no further notice of the soldier. They lowered the coffin into the earth—the son took off his hat, and knelt down to say a short prayer, they all followed his example, and when this was done, they arose from their knees, and the grave was covered in.

At this moment I saw the old soldier, advancing, with an uncertain step, towards the fu-

neral group. When he came to the head of the grave, he uncovered his head, and seemed about to address the people, directing his attention in particular to Morty Shanahan. He remained, I think, for more than a minute in the same attitude, like one struck motionless while in the act of speaking. At length, fetching a deep and painful sigh, he suddenly let his clenched hands fall down; his head sunk, his eye stared meaningless, and he fell, with a hoarse sound in his throat, prostrate upon the grave.

They all recognized him as the pious military pilgrim, who had been residing among the ruins about the country now for several months. They attributed his illness to that enthusiastic spirit of devotion, which had suggested his nocturnal austerities, and which excited at once their awe and admiration. They lifted him up with care, placed him sitting on a head stone, and finally perceiving that he gained no strength, they bore him away between

them in the direction of Shanahan's cottage.

I was too much occupied with my own difficulties at the time to pay much attention to this event, although it recurred to my memory in some time after, with a singular force.

As I returned homeward, across the sheep-walk (a memorable spot to me and the poor family from whom I had just separated), I was crossed by a leash of handsome pointers, which I recognised as Harry Dalton's. I heard his voice calling to them from an adjoining field, and in a few moments he sprung over a broken gap and came upon my path.

It was the first time I had seen either of the Daltons since my quarrel with the father. Henry had been, until lately, absent at Cove, (the Bologne of Southern Ireland), and he looked as fresh, as young, and as gay as ever. He came up to me with frank and evident delight, and gave me his hand like one who had never heard of the quarrel between me and his

father, or like one that was determined not to lose a friend for his father's fault. I was greatly pleased with this instance of good-nature, and met it with equal cordiality and good humour. After he had enquired with great interest for all the remaining members of my family, he said :—

"I will come and pay you a visit soon, Mr. Tracy, but not this morning, for I have not come in proper visiting trim, and I have to make a long walk yet before I return."

"Oh, come in," said I, "your friend Ellen will excuse you, and there are no other ladies. Besides, you will meet an old friend of your's."

"And who is that, sir?"

"A gentleman who has had reason to remember you. You put your mark upon him a few months since."

"Oh, Mr. Paul Purtill! Ah, is he there? I have a great mind to go. Does he stay the night with you?"

"I think so."

I wish I knew his chamber, and I would come on purpose to sing under his window. Do you remember the evening at the bridewell? Ah, that was a freak after his own heart."

"I am sure he likes you the better for it," said I, "if the truth were told."

"He told me so himself upon the ground, the instant we had shaken hands. Well, Mr. Tracy, I'm delighted to see you, and to hear that Miss Tracy is well. Will you remember her friend Henry to her, and say that he will come to put her in mind of him in a few days? I owe her some delicious hours, and I am unwilling to give them up until she tells me I have ceased to deserve them."

"Henry," said I, perceiving to what he alluded, "you always were, and always will be welcome to us. You never once lost ground in our esteem even for an instant. It would

be impossible for us not to like our friend, and the constant friend of all within the circle of his influence."

The youth reached me his hand with a face that glowed with delight. He seemed about to reply, but after a moment pressing my hand and smiling with an expression of vivid satisfaction, he touched his hat and turned away. In a few moments I saw him bounding towards the shore, and encouraging his dogs who were gambolling around his path as if he had charmed them too by a more than common attachment. Indeed there was no being at all, capable of the sentiment, who did not feel it forcibly for him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Two o'clock, the hour appointed by the wealthy stranger for his arrival, was now very near, and I hurried homeward to prepare for his reception. I was seated in the drawing-room with my daughter, endeavouring by every argument, which presented itself to my mind, to encourage her in the resolution she had formed, and to restore composure to her manner. But I had not been at all successful in this, before

we were startled by a loud knock at the hall-door.

I expected the stranger, but it was *only* old Clancy. He entered the room with a peculiar and perplexing expression upon his countenance. His salutation was constrained and cold, and yet he entered freely into conversation with us both. I experienced the uncomfortable feeling of one who perceives by many signs that there is

> something ill a brewing towards his rest,

and yet can gather only vague indications of what is intended from the countenances that surround him.

In a short time, a second knock announced the arrival of the tall Nabob. We heard his slow and languid step upon the stairs; I perceived that the heart of Ellen began to fail her, and a secret smile crept over the features of old Clancy, which perplexed me in the ex-

treme. The door opened and the stranger entered, attired as usual, and with that air of languid haughtiness in his demeanour which made him even the more formidable from his very feebleness. He walked with an appearance of much exertion to Ellen, took her hand, enquired kindly after her health; then turned to Clancy, who had left his chair in order to save him the labour of crossing the floor again, gave him his hand, and finally bowed courteously to myself, but yet with that delicacy of repulse which had before offended me in his demeanour. He then sunk into a chair, and remained for some moments drooping in a state of perfect exhaustion.

"I feared," he said at last, after referring to a richly chased gold watch, "that I had let my time go by, but I find that I am punctual. Well, Mr. Tracy, as business must always come before pleasure, perhaps you will excuse me if I wish that our arrangements may be at once completed."

I was entirely at his service.

"My friend, Mr. Clancy," he continued, pausing to gather strength almost at every word, "has come at my request, to act as one of our witnesses."

I reddened a little, and looked a good deal embarrassed, but neither of the gentlemen appeared to take the slightest notice. It was impossible for me to say anything; so I made an awkward bow, and continued silent.

"My young friend," added the stranger, "whose interest in this affair, is the most intimate of all, must shortly join us now. I sent to-day requesting him to meet me here, and I am sure we shall have him amongst us ere long."

"Your messenger," said I, "will not find him at home, for he is in the house at this moment."

Old Clancy and the stranger exchanged glances of alarm. "In this house!" ex-

claimed the latter, "Have you seen him then?"

"He has been on a visit here," said I, "these three days."

Here the two old gentlemen again exchanged glances, and looked as if relieved from some unpleasant fear.

"Will you have the goodness to let him know of our arrival then?" said the stranger.

I rang the bell accordingly, and a servant made his appearance.

"Will you let Mr. Purtill know," said I, "that he is wanted in the drawing room?"

"Misther Purtill is out, sir," replied the man.

"Where is he gone?"

A tremendous knocking at the hall door cut short the answer. Looking down through the window, I saw that it was our swain, and though it was only a little after noon, as drunk as Silenus. The door was opened, and he staggered up the

stairs, shouting, singing, and lashing the banisters with his whip. The stranger placed his hands upon his ears, and old Clancy covered his lips, to prevent his laughing aloud. Ellen seemed utterly dismayed, and her father looked the very image of disconcerted folly.

Purtill dashed into the room, his hat placed awry, and thrust down upon his head, and his dress displaying the marks of recent strife. He gazed for a moment on the strange faces which the room contained, bowed very low, and smiled in the most grotesque manner, and then turning towards where I stood, a picture of a pitiable interest, he said aloud:

"Tracy, congratulate me, I have done it."

"Done what, Mr. Purtill?"

"Done what you could'nt do, with all your industry—I've killed him! I've sent him half way down—your foe, your enemy, Dalton. No, let me see, what am I saying—no—not Dalton, but his man—his ferret Maney—cunning, cau-

tious Maney—I've given him another cause to be *in dread.* He is kicking among the eggs and butter, like a papist as he is, begging you pardon Miss Tracy for talking of a papist in a drawing room, but things will happen."

"What have you done?" asked Mr. Clancy, while the stranger stared like one possessed.

"An impudent dog! I paid him for his begging trick, though 'twas a right good one—and he deserves credit for it; but, stay, let me see now; here I was, walking quietly down the street of the old town, when who should come behind and tap me on the shoulder but Maney. Ah, ha! says I, Maney, is that the way—'tis, says he, sir, the very way—the very way—let me see now—what was saying?"

"And so you walked on," said Clancy, "leading him."

"Aye, that's it;—I walked on, and Maney kept close to my side, until we were passing a cellar where they had eggs and butter and

crubeens and cabbage exposed upon the steps for sale. Well—let me see now—Maney was there—here was I—and there was the cellar.—Very good.—What was I saying?"

"And you tumbled him into the cellar?"

"Head over heels! Smash went the eggs and dishes, the butter mashed upon the ground, and Maney's head stuck fast into a firkin. The women screeched—the dogs barked and yelped—the cats mewed — children squalled — the blackguards shouted—the mob collected, and the huxters below stairs fell tooth and nail upon poor Maney, and almost flayed him alive. I stood all the while at the top of the steps stretching out a pacific hand, and exhorting them to mercy—how do you know my good people, but it was accidental? how do you know but some mischievous person threw him down? But they paid me no manner of attention, so I passed on to the next tavern—to enjoy a laugh in a corner, and to take a little——let me see now—Eh? What was I saying?"

"It is sufficiently evident," said Clancy, "without any explanation."

"But," said Purtill, with a look of sudden self recollection. "I ought to apologize for entering the drawing room in this *degagé*. I will just step down, and put myself in better plight for good society. 'Twas a capital joke though, was'nt it?" And he staggered out of the room, singing, marvellously out of time:

He on whose pale and sunken cheek,
The hot grape leaves no laughing streak;
On whose dull white brow and clouded eye
Cold thought and care sit heavily,
Him you must fly,
'Tween you and I,
That man is very bad company.

"May I ask," said the stranger, with a languid smile, "whether that is the gentleman whose pretensions you supposed I had come here to advocate?"

"I cannot account for this," said I, in much confusion, "I never saw this before."

"I never saw him before," resumed the stranger, "I have no knowledge whatever of the man."

"No knowledge!" I exclaimed in a faint tone.

"None whatever," he replied.

It struck me like an electric bolt. My mean and selfish retractation then was wholly vain and idle. I ventured a glance at my daughter, and she seemed at once perplexed and relieved. I dared not look at Clancy. I felt an agony of shame, remorse, and disappointment, such as I never before had any idea of.

At length, after leaving us in suspense for a sufficient time, the yellow man of mystery arose in the manner of one about to perform an inevitable yet agitating duty. He approached my daughter, took her hand, and, after gazing on her countenance for several moments in silent thought, he said:

"Ellen, I told your father at our first

meeting, that I had long indulged myself in certain eccentric habits, and found an enjoyment in émploying the magic power which wealth places in the hands of those who perhaps have little other enjoyment left on earth. I perceive by what has just taken place, that my failing, in this instance, has occasioned you some painful moments, and I regret that, for the sake of trying another (perhaps, too severely), I overlooked the circumstance of your being necessarily a fellow-sufferer. Forgive me for it. The young friend for whom I undertook to use my interest with you, is indeed in this house, at this instant, though not quite so buoyant in spirits as that gay gentleman who was preferred before him. He is waiting your pleasure in the hall at this instant. Shall I call him in?"

Ellen bowed her head, while her whole frame trembled with an agitation of fearful and joyous expectance. As to myself, I was so stupified that I had but a dim and sen-

suous perception of what passed before me. I suffered nevertheless an agony of exquisite suspense, until the stranger re-appeared, introducing by the hand young Rowan Clancy.

"Nothing but pistols, sir! nothing but pistols would satisfy this young gentleman two hours since. He would not even hear me speak a word in my own vindication. The end of a handkerchief, or across a billiard table, were the only arguments that could have any weight with him."

"My dear sir——"

"Well, it is ended. Miss Tracy, I believe you know this gentleman. We have discovered, at last, the real cause of that extraordinary document to which you affixed your signature this morning, and though it was a weakness, we must think it a very venial one. If you should be induced to recal that astonishing production, my young friend will at all events have the satisfaction of knowing that he is not likely to be met, in future domestic con-

tingencies by any singular contumacy in his companion. To you, Mr. Tracy, I will make no observation. I perceive that you have within the last ten minutes been reading a heavy lecture to your own heart, and the painful recollection of my own faults will not suffer me to insist upon the failings of another. But by what strange mistake did you happen to take me for the friend of Purtill?"

"I was given to understand," said I, starting a little from my place, "that such was your own name. I knew he had a brother in the Indies and—"

"I see, I see it all! Ah, shame! shame! shame!"

His attitude, his look, at this instant, filled me with that strange sensation which I had so often felt in looking on him. The same hurry, the same tumult in my spirits, the same feeling of deep and mortifying shame swept

through my mind and passed away again. He stood leaning with one hand clenched upon the table, and gazing upon Ellen with a face of tender sorrow and affection. At length he said :—

"Why should I any longer keep this restraint upon my own feelings? My name is not what you supposed,—it is——"

His head sunk upon his breast. He trembled exceedingly. Ellen left her chair and came forward to his side, looking with a wild anxiety into his face.

"It is difficult," said he, "to speak it within these walls, where it has occasioned so much of penitence and perhaps of blame. But does no one here remember Mary's brother?"

"My uncle! my dear uncle!" Ellen shrieked aloud.

"My child! my child!" was the answering call of nature in the stranger's heart, and

with kisses and murmurs of fervent love, the orphan child and the long exiled brother were locked within each other's arms. A thrill of painful delight struck through my bosom at these sounds: the tears burst freely from the eyes of the aged Clancy, and the son stood firmly upon his feet contemplating, with swimming eyes and arms folded hard across his breast, the affecting picture.

"My dear child!" Ulick exclaimed in a broken voice.—"My own poor Mary's image. And then he put her face away a little, and looked upon her and caught her to his breast again and kissed her close and often. "The very voice! the eye! the gentle manner! The rose-bud never grew more truly to the likeness of its faded parent! Oh, my forsaken sister! When shall I forgive myself? When will you forgive me?"

He sunk down into a chair, and a tender

silence fell upon the scene. I took the opportunity of stealing away from the apartment, and going to look for that packet which Mary had committed to my keeping, on the morning before her death. I found it, sealed and directed, in the place where her own hands had laid it. I brought it back to the drawing room, where not a figure had changed its position in my absence, and gave it without saying a word. Looking around him for permission, he broke the seal, and discovered two portraits on ivory, unset, which I remembered having seen Mary execute. They were the likenesses done, from memory, of her parents. Underneath these was a letter which Ulick read in silence. I read it shortly after, and found it to contain the following words:—

"My dear—dear Brother,

I have a secret feeling, whether the result of my habitual nervousness, or a real pre-

sentiment, that the hope which I have long indulged of meeting you again on earth is not to be fulfilled. I wish therefore to leave you some remembrance that you may receive with kindness, if you should return to Ireland after I am called away. I intreat your pardon for my fault. I implore your forgiveness, and I beseech you to preserve these portraits, by the days of our childhood, and by the love of the dear originals. Forgive me, forgive me for my fault! The remembrance of it has haunted me awake and asleep, ever since the day of our separation. Do not punish my innocent children for my offence. Be the friend of my husband, for he has been a tender and a constant friend, and I was always more to blame than he. My brother, whom I have wronged! my guardian, whom I have disobeyed, forgive me! I promise myself that you will, for I could not meet my hour with the necessary peace of mind, if I thought my offence so

great that it could not find forgiveness even in the tomb. Farewell, my dear—dear brother, always think of me as your affectionate sister,

MARY TRACY."

After Ulick had read this letter he leaned forward, supporting his forehead on his hand for some minutes, in deep affliction. At length, he arose, and for the first time took my hand in his.

"You were dear to her," he said, "evidently dear, and she does fervent justice here to your affection. To you, therefore, I say what I would give life itself to be enabled to say to her, that I forgive her for that lonely fault, that I regret my selfish anger, and that I deplore my long estrangement from her and from her family. Mary's fault was venial, it was the fault of a moment, an error of the judgment rather than the heart. But mine

cannot be so easily forgotten, nor forgiven ; it was deliberate, selfish, and excessive ; it was the willing act of years, and the remorse which it has left must be proportionate to its duration."

Even while he spoke thus in sincere and heartfelt acknowledgment of error, the manner of Ulick Regan had not wholly lost that self-sustained and patrician air which he had derived from his birth and education. When most he blamed himself, he held his head most high, and there was something of rebuke mingled even with the pathos of his voice at those moments.

I was prevented from replying by a knocking, rapid and confident, at the parlour door, which Rowan had taken the precaution to secure. It was Purtill, who had now returned stripped of his *degagé* as he called it, and made a little decenter than usual. I took him out upon the lawn, and endeavoured as well as I could to

break the matter to him, hinting that I made a mistake, and that it would be wiser and better for all parties to let the negotiation sink to the ground at once. But nothing could exceed his indignation.

"I'll tell you what, Tracy," he said, with great vehemence, "this is the second time I have come to you here upon this business, and, as it has happened now upon your own invitation, I'll not quit your house until I carry your daughter out of it."

He sealed the protestation with a brace of oaths, and seemed about to add a third, when his purpose was interrupted in a laconic manner. A blow from behind, taking him exactly on the bare crown, made him stagger a little, and fall prostrate on the earth. Looking round to see whence the violence proceeded, I beheld the young countryman whom I had seen last at Purtill's, with a hazel stick in his hand, and his body bent forward, while a triumphant smile was

in his eye, and over his ruddy face. At the same instant, little Maney Mc Manus, with a face all covered with patches, and a kerchief bandaging his head, came forward with halting speed, and laid his hand upon the shoulder of the fallen man. He was followed by Mihil, the great coated Goliah of Dalton's gang, who arrived in time to overpower the captive just as he seemed inclined to rise and contend for liberty. They led him off, notwithstanding my remonstrances, added to his own, for though I had no desire to detain him any longer as a visitor, I did not wish to see him taking his leave under circumstances so unpleasing to the feelings of a gentleman.

"I tould him I'd be even with him," said the young man, "an' I think he can't say but I kep my word. Well, Misther Thracy, you know the young woman your honour gay me the charge of that night in Limerick?"

"What of her?" I asked.

"When I came home that night, sir, she took ill, an' was forced to stay at my mother's 'till to-day. But I'm to carry her home to her people to-morrow mornin'."

"Did she tell you who they were?"

"Faix to tell you a fact, I did'nt once go out o' my way to ask her the question."

"Well, it is no matter—for I have a surmise of my own. But why did you strike that gentleman?"

"Oyeh, what signify is what hurt I could do him with this bit of a kippen?" he said, looking at a hazel stick of an inch and a half in diameter—"its hazel I always uses for things o' that kind, for though the blackthorn gives a better blow, still the hazel hops lighter off the head, an' enables a man to recover his guard the readier."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE next morning we had a visit from Henry Dalton, who was received by Ellen with a frank, joyous welcome, that gave more satisfaction to me and to him than it did to Rowan Clancy. Her uncle, likewise, to whom Henry was altogether a new acquaintance, was much delighted with him. This I thought was principally owing to that unseen spirit of generous boldness which ran underneath the frankness and gaiety

of the young gentleman's manner, and which was an indication to the old nabob of similar claims and a similar disposition.

It was therefore with much concern that we heard him announce this as a parting visit. He came, he said, to take his leave before he should depart for England, the following day being fixed for that purpose. After the course of compliments usual on such occasions, which he performed with the grace of a gentleman and the good feeling peculiar to his own disposition, he left the house, and I accompanied him a considerable distance.

We parted on the banks of a deep gully, which ran into the river through a corcass of reed and bulrush, and on the sides of which a number of country people were employed in cutting the latter, and binding them into sheaves for matting. As I returned slowly along the raised walk, enjoying the beauty of the morning, and the exhilarating freshness of this scene of

rural industry, my attention was suddenly attracted by the sight of a man, rushing across the field in the direction of my house, with a speed that had something in it headlong and furious. I called to him by name, for I knew the ponderous and muscular figure of Morty Shanahan. He stopped short upon the instant, and turned round with a look and gesture of savage dignity and ire. His hair was blown backward from his temples, his brows knitted hard together, and an expression of fierce and gloomy resolution was over all his frame, like that which terrified me on the night when I underwent his meance at the cottage.

"The deed is done at last!" he exclaimed, as I came near, in a hoarse voice, and with a desperate smile upon his lip, "the deed is finished, and Dalton has done his worst against us—he sent home my sisther to our floore in shame and want."

"Morty," said I, "be pacified awhile, and listen to me."

"That's what I want," he said, with great fury, "an that's what I'm going to be; I told you what I thought—that he was the deçaiver of my girl, an' this mornin' proved my words were true. My brother's blood was nothing to this. But I am going to be pacified—and I will be pacified if I should die for it. I care for nothing now—nor nobody."

"Are you sure it was he sent her home to to you?"

"She's there, desthroyed, upon my floore! I did'nt ask a question of her—why need I? I wondher is Dalton at home now?"

"What do you want with him?"

"To speak to him about our tythes. Believe me if I have your luck with him, I'll not let go the grip so aisily."

"You never will, depend upon it."

"An' that's what I'm in dhread. But I'll

watch for it. He's greatly guarded surely. I wondher," he said, and then he paused in gloomy thought for several minutes.—" I wondher where's his son ? "

" Aye—" said I. "if you would speak to him, you would have a good friend with his father."

" So I'm thinkin'—so I'm thinkin'—" he muttered, a little wildly—" I wondher where he is. I'm goin' to be pacified—an' I *will* be pacified, if there's blood in Dalton's veins, or strength in these fingers." He said this with frantic loudness, and then suddenly falling into a low tone of voice and musing attitude, he muttered —" I wondher where's the son ? "

" He is gone homeward by the shore," said I— " run after him — make him your friend, and you are certain of redress from the father."

" I'm thinkin' so—that's what I'm thinkin' !" he murmured—his eyes still gloomily fixed upon the earth. " My brother shot—my sister brought

to shame—a thrap laid for myself, an' all for no raison!—why then, since he can do so much for no raison, we'll see what I can do with raison on my side. I told him I would bring him low before the year was ended. That's eight months since—an' I'll see if I can't make my word good at last—let him blame himself for that—"

While he muttered this speech in a wild and absent manner, he walked rapidly down the bank, and I could perceive continued to commune aloud with himself when he was out of hearing. Totally unconscious of the design he had already formed, and yet filled with a secret and prophetic anxiety, I returned home and joined our company at luncheon.

They were all merry but me.—I lay apart upon a sofa, reflecting with sorrow upon my faults, and occasionally forming an uneasy conjecture as to the intention of Shanahan. I felt it my duty to to send off Phil Fogarty with a sealed note to

Dalton, putting him upon his guard against violence, without exposing poor Shanahan to further persecution, by mentioning his name. When I hadd one this, I felt more at ease, and, returning to my sofa, listened to the following song which Ellen sang to her piano, and which, as she informed us, was one of the numerous little pieces with which he had furnished her portfolio. He regarded her, indeed, more in the light of a sister than an acquaintance.

I.

You never bade me hope, 'tis true
  I asked you not to swear—
But I looked in those eyes of blue,
  And read a promise there.

II.

The vow should bind—with maiden sighs
  That maiden lips have spoken—
But that which looks from maiden eyes
  Should last of all be broken!

Towards evening my anxiety became almost oppressive, and I walked out upon the lawn to

relieve my spirits by exercise. The appearance of the sky was singular and imposing. Over one half the heavens there reigned a purple gloom, which threw its shadow on the distant landscape, and impressed the spirits with a feeling of insecurity and awe. The remainder of the landscape was lighted with a dim and feeble sunshine, like that which is shed through a faintly coloured medium. The disk of the sun himself was broadly visible in the west, his splendour slightly veiled by the skirting mists that fell from the aggregation of vaulted gloom, already described. Presently, a slowly moving mass of cloud settled over the western horizon, and turned its dark mass to a thousand brilliant and varied hues, according as the majestic lord of day sunk down and couched within its bosom. The sunshine was now fled—except in the extreme west, where the rays, shooting downward straight through the cloudy volume, fell, like a shower of golden light, upon the earth. A rushing

sound, like that of a rising wind, proceeded from the region of distant gloom, although not a leaf was stirred upon the trees around me.

While I stood contemplating the changes of the heavens, I perceived my messenger at length returning with Dalton's answer to my note. Without waiting to question him as to the occasion of his long delay, I opened his reply, and read as follows:

"Not for my sake—not for the sake of any claim I have on your forgiveness—but for the love of mercy—of humanity—forget, for one night, the injuries that I have done you, and come hither to Shanahan's cottage, the instant you receive this note. H. DALTON."

I hurried into the house for my hat and stick, and departed with all possible expedition for the place of rendezvous. The way was not long—and a few minutes found me at the cottage door.

Several country people were assembled

outside, and a number of Police, as usual, guarded the approach. On entering, I beheld Dalton seated on a hay-bottomed chair, in the centre of the kitchen, leaning forward on a carbine, placed erect, his hands crossed over the muzzle, and his forehead resting upon these. He did not perceive my approach. The wife of Shanahan was standing at a distance, with her apron raised to her eyes, which were red from weeping. Two or three children were huddled behind her in a corner, gaping in simple wonder on the crowd. The unfortunate sister was standing nearer to her destroyer, and gazing on him with an expression of deep compassion.

"He misses his son, sir," whispered a countryman, who stood near the window, as I passed in, "an' the world would'nt persuade him but what Morty Shanahan is afther wreaking his revenge upon him."

A sudden horror darted through my bosom. "Is it possible?" I exclaimed, "I thought

Henry Dalton was the friend of every one that knew him."

"Revenge, revenge, sir," returned the countryman, tossing his head, "it's the only grip they had o' the father, an' it isn't the first time they threatened to use it."

The evening at this moment darkened extremely, and a few sheets of reddish lightning quivered through the gloomy vault above, followed at a long interval by the sound of the far distant thunder. Some of the country people crossed their brows in silence, and looked out.

"He has messengers out in all directions, sir," continued the countryman, "an' I believe they'll be shortly comin' in, now."

"Did not Mr. Henry Dalton return home then," said I, "since morning?"

"He did not, sir," said the man. "Mr. Dalton here was told by some of the Morans, that were cuttin' bulrushes below in the gully

to day mornin', that they seen yourself and himself walkin' together, an' that afther he partin' you, they seen Shanahan come up an' spake to you awhile, an' then make afther the young gentleman, an' they teald Dalton of it, an' that's what made him send to you, I believe, to ax you about it."

"'Twas the sore day to him," said old Moran, who had joined us during the last speech, "that ever he angered Morty Shanahan. The whole o' that family had ever an' always a dark sthrain in 'em, that was'nt aisy to be meddled with."

The rain had now begun to descend, the lightning became more blue and vivid, the thunder louder and nearer, and the people began to crowd into the cottage to avoid the descending shower.

A quick and rattling peal, almost close overhead, startled Dalton from his posture of abstraction, and made him stare wildly through

the open door-way. His face, which looked fearfully pale and distorted, was like that of a person suddenly aroused from a deep and dreamless sleep. He signified by his hand that they should keep the passage open between him and the door, and as they obeyed, and began to form it, his eye lighted on myself.

"Ah, Tracy," he said, in a faint, weak voice, "I see you got my note. When did you leave him? Tell me at what hour, at once."

"Immediately before noon," said I.

"How did he say he should return home?"

"By the shore."

"And you saw Shanahan afterwards?"

"Immediately."

"Did he," he paused, "did he threaten Henry at all?"

"No."

"Not in the indirectest manner?"

"He threatened *you*," said I, "he spoke

of vengeance on yourself, and said he had a way to reach you, but he never mentioned Henry's name, except in kindness."

"*That* was his kindness. Oh, he said very truly, he had, he has a way, and he is treading it knee deep, even while I speak with you. It flashed upon me like a sudden light the instant I received your note; though that gave no such intimation. My sands of happiness, I said, are nearly run, for my enemy writes to me like a friend, without a cause of change. Pity my heart! but hush! Another time."

The rain was now rushing down in torrents, the lightning flashes came, like a rolling fire, in rapid succession, and a stormy horror reigned through all the air. A man rushed into the cottage dripping wet, and was instantly accosted by Dalton, yet in a feeble and restrained and anxious tone:

"Well, Maney, has he arrived?

"Wisha, no, sir," said Maney, "they had no account of him at the house before me, and 'tisn't five minutes since I left it."

Dalton groaned audibly.

"I hurried back again," continued Maney, "afeerd you might want to send me elsewhere on the head of it."

"Not yet," said Dalton, "stand aside here, Maney; do not stand between me and the door."

Again a deep silence fell upon the group within the cottage, and all eyes were alternately directed from the anxious father, to the storm that raved prophetic in the heavens.

Another figure, drenched in rain, crossed the threshold and stood before the father. It was that of Mihil, the spy. I did not think that such a countenance as his could ever have displayed so much compassion as it evinced at this instant. But there is often a kind of affection arising out of long habits of fellowship in

roguery, that throws a softening hue of amiability upon the most repulsive pictures of human depravity, and unites the hearts of knaves with a bond resembling that which binds the virtuous.

"Mihil," said Dalton, "if your news is good, tell me so; but if not, stand aside here, and say nothing."

Mihil stood aside, and said nothing.

"If I could be sure," I heard Dalton whisper low, as if in communion with his own spirit, "if I could be sure my reason would not fail me." And then he gave utterance to a faint and exquisitely painful moan, that went to my heart at once, and made me forget all his injuries on the instant.

Two policemen, covered with their long blue cloaks, now appeared at the door, with downcast looks, and helmets draggled in wet. They looked in for a moment, and then turning round, seemed to expect the arrival of some comrades.

It was a longtime before Dalton could mutter, in a thin and broken voice, like that of a person in sickness:——

"Did you come too late?"

"Too late, sir," echoed one of the men.

"I'd rather it had been my own child's case," added the other.

Dimly then, through the rain and gloom, we could gather in the outline of another group, advancing up the road, and bearing between them, on their shoulders, what appeared to be a heavy burthen. They came near, and lowering the charge from their shoulders, they entered the cottage. It was a narrow wicker door which they carried. A space was cleared for them within, and they laid down their burthen on the floor. The scene which followed disturbs my dreams, night after night, even at this distance of time. Upon the door lay, dead and stark, the body of Henry Dalton; the face untouched, and beautiful, even in death; the fair and curling hair

dabbled with rain, and the fashionable attire disfigured and torn by the assault of violent hands.

The women screamed and clapped their hands aloud. The men pressed close upon each other, and gazed upon the corpse with looks of stern dismay. I looked to the wretched father, but his eyes were fixed, tearless and hot, upon another figure in the open doorway. It was that of Shanahan, standing guarded between two policemen, and gazing with a look of troubled triumph on the scene within.

Dalton looked at him for a long time before he was able to articulate a word. At length, he pointed with one finger to the corpse, and looking on Shanahan with a ghastly smile, he said in a tone of feeble and querulous reproach :——

"What did *he* do to you?"

Shanahan did not follow with his eyes the finger of the miserable father, but he fixed them full upon the latter, and then he pointed to his sister, to his wife, his children, and replied :——

" He was as much to you as my dead brother and those were to myself. Upon this floore, eight months ago, you laid my brother's body where your son's is lying now, an' you stood smilin' and defyin' me there, where you are sittin' now with a different smile upon your lips. I tould you, an' I swore an oath upon it, that I would bring you low enough before another year, an' you druv me at last to make good my word."

" Well," said Dalton, " you say very right. The time was when I would have found a pleasure in telling you that you should hang high for this, but that's all gone now, for you have broke my heart."

Shanahan looked greatly troubled.

" It was your own doin's," he said, with an anxious sullenness, " you dhruv me upon it, by your own behav'our."

" It was indeed the work of my own hands. Well, all is over now, and I have not the heart

to curse you for it. May heaven forgive us both! How strange that prayer sounds! Cover that poor boy's face until we are alone. You are right indeed, you say truly, you have brought me low enough. You may be very proud, for never was a triumph more complete; never.—Oh, Harry! oh, my child!"

He shrieked the last words aloud, as if in sudden agony, and then sunk down, stupid, and tearless still, into his seat. Some one removed the carbine from his hand, but it was a needless precaution, for the heart of the man was evidently broken, and the commencement of a lasting imbecility was visible in his countenance. The spirit, that would not bend, was shattered on its throne.

The murderer was removed in a state of mind far different from that which he had anticipated in the gratification of his revenge. The Policemen told me that they had found him on the shore sitting by the body of the ill

fated youth (whom he had strangled by downright strength), in a state of almost idiotic remorse. I cannot shake off a horrid sensation that haunts me even to this day, that the manner of the poor youth's death was suggested to his murderer by a recollection of my own assault upon the father.

We followed Henry Dalton to his grave in a few days after, with a feeling of deeper commiseration and regret than is often felt for those who die young and single. Never did I witness such a concourse of people, of all ranks and all parties, as were assembled at his funeral. The country people, too, were most forward to evince their sympathy at the wholly undeserved fate of the universal favourite.

Dalton continued to live on in a state of mournful imbecility for many years. To my great astonishment, within a few months after the above event, he sent me back the sum of money I had lent him, with the interest, and

many thanks for its use. This touched me, not so much for the value of the money as for the indication which it afforded of the entire change that had taken place in his own character.

The unhappy Shanahan suffered publicly for his offence, after expressing while in prison the utmost remorse and contrition for what he had done. The occurrence, terrific as it was, furnished an additional corroboration of a truth which has been unhappily demonstrated within our memory by too many examples, that the vengeance of an Irish peasant is not to be despised.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I HAD strong suspicions that he was not the last male member of his unfortunate family, (on whom the judgment of the parricide had fallen so heavily) and I was enabled in a few months to ascertain the correctness of this surmise.

I had made many inquiries after the old soldier who had been residing within our Abbey, after the morning on which I had seen him in the grave-yard. I could only learn, how-

ever, that he had left the neighbourhood on the following day, and, taking one of the western roads, departed, no one knew whither.

After the marriage festival had been celebrated in our family, which event took place early in the spring, the greater number went to reside, for some months, among the lake and mountain solitudes in Kerry. We occupied a cottage on the Killarney side of the lower lake, and spent our time, as all visitors do, in exploring the natural wonders and scenes of loveliness and grandeur with which it abounds.

The Hag's Valley, from the circumstances which had been related to me by Dalton, attracted a principal portion of my interest. We explored it several times, and discovered in the centre of the terrific recess, the remains of the cabins which had once contained the rival families of Shanahan and his bride. I made some efforts to learn the par-

ticulars of the story from a few straggling goat-herds, who resided in various corners of the valley, but without much success.

At length, accident threw in my way what I had long been seeking for in vain. I had undertaken the ascent of Carraw Tual, and, leaving my party behind on the borders of one of the lakes which Dalton had described to me, I penetrated the Esk Collee, accompanied by a fair haired mountaineer, who bounded up the steep as lightly as a dapper footman on the staircase of a city fashionable. Struck by the magnificent horror of the scenery by which I was surrounded, and wishing to add to my enjoyment by associating it with some appropriate legend, I turned to my companion for information. But although the mountaineers are generally remarkable for that quickness of imagination and retentiveness of memory which take a lasting hold of the legacies of old romance, it was my fortune, in

this instance, to light upon a spirit that was purely of the present, and cared neither to give nor receive intelligence of persons and events with which his own immediate fortunes could never become connected.

" Have you ever heard any old story connected with this place?" was my opening query.

" Ould story, érshishin?"

" Yes. Any account of war, or battles, or love, or murder, committed there."

" Faix, I never seen any love committed there, nor murthers aither."

" What, did the O'Donoghues never do anything remarkable in the neighbourhood?"

" Why then, I would n't be surprised to hear they did."

" Did you never hear any story told of a murder done in that valley?" said I, pointing down into the lonely Coom Dhuv.

"Why then, I would'nt wondher if there was; —'tis a lonesome place, surely."

"But you never heard of any?"

"Oyeh, wisha, faix, I did'nt."

"Did none of the ancient chieftains ever reside among those mountains?"

He looked musingly for a moment, in the direction in which I pointed.

"I don't doubt," said he, at length, "but the Mc Carthy Mores lived over on that mountain."

"And what did they do there?"

"Wisha, faix, it's hard for me to tell. I suppose they hunted there, an' fished, an' things that way."

"And did they never meet the O'Donoghues, or any other family, in their excursions."

"Why then I don't doubt but they come across one another below in that valley."

"And what do you suppose they did when they met?" said I.

"Dear knows, I would'nt wondther if they fought a battle there."

So much, thought I, for a legend of the Coom Dhuv. The historian supposes that the Mc Carthy Mores resided on one of the mountains, he does'nt doubt but they "came across" the O'Donoghues in the Black Valley, and he would'nt be surprized to hear that they fought a battle there. But if every hypothetical part of history were delivered with the same candour, to what a "poor half pint" might we reduce the quantity of positive information.

"Did you never," said I, preparing to try him on more modern subjects, "did you never hear of a family named Shanahan, who resided in the centre of the Hag's Valley?"

"Oyeh, the Shanahans!" he exclaimed, bounding off at once, as if I had struck the feather spring of his intellect, "Mostha wisha, 'tis I that do, an' that well! Sure 'twas my own father, the keeper, he was near killin', upon this

mountain. You heard the story how himself an' his wife murthered the ould father between 'em?"

"I did."

"Well, he's come home again, afther all. He went sodgering for many years, an' he's below at this moment, livin' in a corner o' the ould ruin at Mucruss. Sure I seen him myself."

"An' why is he not apprehended?" said I, "if he is certainly known."

"Known, eyeh? Right well they all know him. But who'd take him? Who'd lay a hand on the poor ould man? Look, 'tis the way, in place o' wishin' to bring him to justice, they all have compassion for him, you'd think — an' so would any one that would look at him. He does'nt afford himself a meal's mait in the day, an' when he walks out about the place, he has a lonesome look with him, that you'd pity him, now, to see him."

"Has he ever come into the Hag's Valley?"

"Not he, for the world, nor across that river below that divides it from the Killarney side. But I often seen him of an' evenin' comin' down to that bridge, an' he'd come half way across it, an' there he'd stop, for hours, lookin' up the valley, an' then he'd go back again. Do you see that little chapel there at this side o' the river below?"

"I do."

"Well, 'tis there he comes all the ways to hear mass of a Sunday, in preference to the Killarney chapels, for that's the place where he used to hear it of ould. But he never crosses the sthrame, nor comes among the ould neighbours at all, only pulls out his beads there over, an' kneels down upon the bank by himself—ashamed to come near them, an' they knowin' him."

"And afraid," added I, curious to discover if my humble companion could apprehend the fineness of the sentiment, "afraid of his life, too, I suppose?"

"Oyeh, no, sir!" exclaimed the mountaineer with quickness and warmth, "not a bit afeerd. He has'nt a morsel o' that fear about him, for he would'nt care this minute for death, I b'lieve. Only ashamed, he is, ashamed, now, to have 'em lookin' him in the face, an' he knowin' what he done. If you go yourself, next Sunday, an' it's a Palm Sunday, too, you'll see him there below, as I tell you."

I mentioned this conversation on my return, and it was agreed that I should accompany the Catholic part of the family to the little chapel on the following Sabbath. We were early at the place, and the scene which was presented to our view on our arrival, was pastoral and interesting. The doors and altars of the humble temple, were decorated with boughs of yew and other evergreens, used as substitutes for the triumphal palms which were scattered in the path of Him, whose lowly ovation into Jerusalem, this morn was set apart to celebrate.

Groups of the peasantry, dressed in their best attire, were seen descending the mountain paths, bearing in their hands and on their shoulders, burthens of the votive tree, and assembling around the chapel doors with cheerful and healthy countenances.

The service proceeded, the palms were collected near the altar, and blessed by the officiating clergyman, who prayed aloud while he sprinkled them with holy water, that as by an olive-branch the Almighty commanded the dove to proclaim peace to the world, so, by His heavenly benediction, He might sanctify those branches of olives and other trees; and grant that what his people on that day acted corporeally for His honour, they might perform the same spiritually with the greatest devotion, by gaining a victory over their enemy, and ardently loving mercy.

The ceremony being concluded, the palms were distributed amongst the people, and the assembly dispersed in many a festive group,

a great number taking their way over that bridge which was the charmed boundary of the remorse-stricken solitary's wanderings. We beheld him kneeling, as usual, by the rapid stream, his stick thrust into the soft bawn, and his hat resting upon it. When the people had passed away, we saw him rise and move in the direction of the bridge. He stopt, as was his wont, in the centre, and remained gazing up the valley. After a little time he turned back, and seemed about to leave the place, but he often paused and communed with himself, and looked back over his shoulder, as if debating whether or no he should once more return to the centre. We watched him now with encreasing interest, for we perceived that he was undergoing some internal struggle with his own mind. He turned about at length, and walked across the bridge with a rapid but uncertain step. Before he had crossed the stream, however, we observed him stagger and fall prostrate on the

ground. Two or three young peasants hastened to his assistance, and curiosity, if not a better feeling, induced the gentlemen of our party to turn back and follow their example. But he had no need of help, for we discovered that he had died, upon the spot, of some internal lesion.

So perished the last member of that unhappy household. For myself, I now lead a peaceful life among a circle of merry friends. My ambition is entirely set at rest, and I think if I could only succeed in obtaining the commission of the peace, which I am at present using every exertion to procure, I should be a contented man for the remainder of my days.

CONCLUSION

OF

TALES OF THE MUNSTER FESTIVALS.

AND here, indulgent reader, we proceed to let fall the curtain on this series of national dramas, which your gentle favour has enabled us to prolong, unbroken, to the ninth weary volume. We proposed at the outset, no more laborious task than that of furnishing a number of Tales, comprising some account of those annual feasts, which are still celebrated, with a religious care,

in the southern parts of Ireland. That plan is now completed. We have done honour to Candlemas-day, on the shores of the since far-famed County of Clare, at the return of Duke Dorgan — we have heard from the lips of Remmy O'Lone, an ample historical explanation of the rustic ceremonies of St. Stephen's day—we have lighted the fires of St. John, for the dismay and the destruction of the Coiner—we have followed the fickle Hardress Cregan, among the city revellers of St. Patrick's-day—and the May-day mummers in the country—we have sat with Eily O'Connor by her lonely Christmas candle—we have called Esther Wilderming from the grave, to catechise the white robed votaries of St. Bridget—and, finally, we have witnessed the distribution of palms, under the guidance of the ambitious Abel Tracy. Our task is therefore ended, and nothing remains for us, but that, until the lapse of some further time and observation shall enable us to present ourselves

before you with something more worthy of your attention, we bid you, indulgent reader, kindly farewell.

Perhaps, however, as we have hitherto refrained from interweaving the thread of those narratives with political discussions, the reader may here permit us to make one parting appeal on behalf of a people with whose peculiarities we have endeavoured to amuse his leisure.

The Irish peasant has, by a combination of circumstances become better known within the last few years to his English ruler, than he had been since the conquest. The subtle and murderous insurrection of 1821, 1822, so wonderful in its unity of purpose, so fearful and so mysterious in its mode of operation, first excited in England an alarmed interest and a strong curiosity respecting the habits of the people. The authors who write under the assumed of name the "O'Hara Family," were the first to gratify that general

desire. They were the first who painted the Irish peasant sternly from the life; they placed him before the world in all his ragged energy and cloudy loftiness of spirit, they painted him as he is, goaded by the sense of national and personal wrong, and venting his long pent up agony in the savage cruelty of his actions, in the powerful idiomatic eloquence of his language, in the wild truth and unregulated generosity of his sentiments, in the scalding vehemence of his reproaches, and the shrewd and biting satire of his jests. They painted him also such as he is sometimes found, with his generous energies annihilated by the depression of centuries, and with the sense of resentment not subdued but stifled; mean, cringing, servile, crafty and sycophantic. It does not detract in any way from the praise of our great contemporaries to say, that the pictures which they drew (with perhaps one solitary exception)* were

*The character of Andy Awling in Crohoore of the Bill-Hook.

more striking than favourable. The peculiar character of their genius led them to the study of human nature in its moods of troubled gloom and of rude excitement. The condition of Ireland unhappily supplied them with a subject too abundant, and their volumes remain to their country a monument of their own genius and of her afflictions, a reproach to one government and a lesson to all others.

It is not necessary for us here to bring into question the object or tendency of our own Tales, for we believe the kindness with which they have been received by the public has been attributable to their pictures of a different class, and the delineation of a different order of feelings. We have endeavoured in most instances, where pictures of Irish cottage life have been introduced, to furnish a softening corollary to the more exciting moral chronicles of our predecessors, to bring forward the sorrows and the

affections more frequently than-the violent and fearful passions of the people.

One fact is now generally known and admitted by candid men,—that the Irish peasant possesses, in a high degree, all those qualities which are considered essential to the formation of a good and useful member of society. The very extravagance of his excesses, while they increase the compassion of the true philanthropist, must also confirm the hope of an easy amelioration of his condition. Vice is nothing more than virtue running wild; and a little benevolent cultivation would soon reduce his thirst of revenge to a regulated love of justice, his craft to prudence, his fondness for quarrel and faction to a Christian courage, and his wild and fanciful superstition to that pure feeling of religion which his ancient Church inculcates. Those who are closely familiar with Irish history must have been astonished to find how exactly similar the character and habits of the

peasantry have been in all ages since the Conquest, operated upon by the same political influences, and transmitting,

from bleeding sire to son,

the same sentiments and the same passions, the same hate of the conqueror, the same fidelity to their native superiors, the same devoted attachment to their Church, even while they neglected its duties, and violated its precepts; the same political credulity, and the same outrageous re-action when that credulity was abused. It might be an interesting investigation to examine into the origin of those varieties in character which appear to be so hereditary, and which can only be broken up by a difference of political situation, and by a more extended system of education. But at present we only wish to speak of the character and condition of the Irish peasant as he is.

It would be a long and laborious task to point out the means of accomplishing a perfect amelioration of that condition. The first step is all that we would press upon the attention of his governors. That first step must be such an improvement in his political position, as will place him beyond the influence of that sordid motive which is the offspring of want. Virtue, though it may be tried and perfected, can hardly have its birth in adversity. Poverty in nations, as in individuals, is the parent of licentiousness, and man must cease to feel the pangs of hunger before he can find leisure to embrace goodness. Will England, then, remain insensible to the personal afflictions, to the continued agonies of this long-suffering and long-neglected class of men? Will she permit their natural protectors, untaxed, to squander their resources abroad, and to return at long intervals only to increase the oppressions of the people? Will those natural guardians of the land, themselves,

continue to prefer a subordinate and ignoble place in the pageantries of foreign courts, to the happiness of their native island, the delight of fostering its internal prosperity, and dwelling amid the blessings of a free-hearted, a virtuous and contented peasantry? Will England continue to wear this burthensome conquest around her neck, like the painful ornaments borne by some Indian princes, serving no other purpose than to exhaust her strength and to embarrass her in her relations with foreign countries? Surely humanity and self-interest both point out the great necessity of adopting that first step above alluded to. Ireland will then no longer be a mere incumbrance on the mighty empire of which she forms a portion, draining its treasury, and only furnishing an iniquitous ministry with the means of oppressing the liberties of the people. She will then be far advanced on her way to that high condition of national prosperity, which will furnish scanty material to the writer of passionate romance, but

which will afford a spectacle of never-tiring beauty and of interest to the lover of Christian wisdom and of his species.

THE END.

E. BENSLEY, PRINTER ANDOVER.